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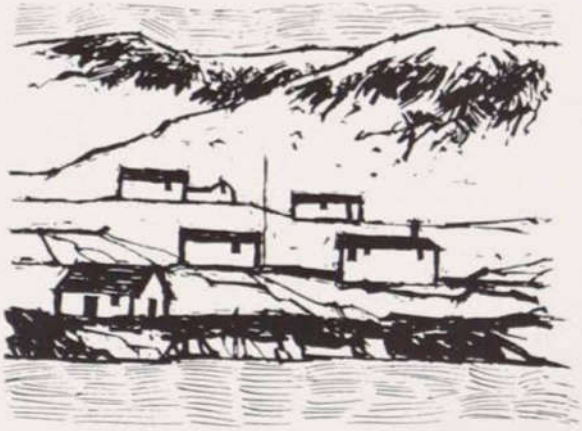
The Beaver

from sea to sea...

across the span

of three centuries



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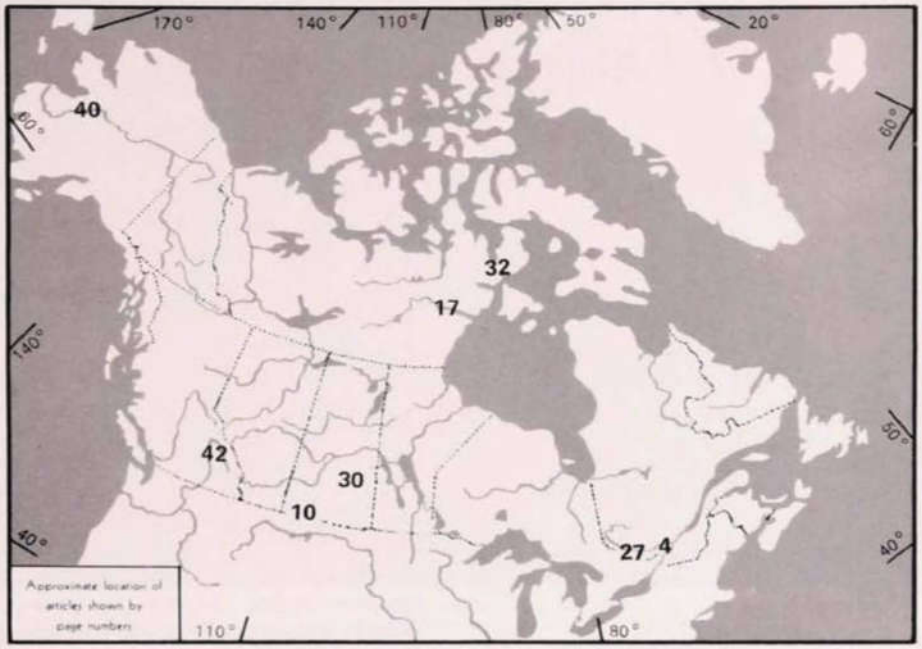

CONTENTS

ENIGMA OF SIR GEORGE SIMPSON 4
John S. Galbraith

RECOLLECTIONS OF A MONUMENT SETTER 10
Frederick M. J. Fulford,
as told to Robert Jewett

FIRST PRINTMAKING YEAR IN BAKER LAKE: 17
Personal Recollections
Sheila Butler

COBWEBS 27
Photographs by Silvija Ulmanis

30 **BRING BACK THE BLUEBIRDS**
Lorne Scott

32 **RAE'S FORT HOPE**
Glynn Barratt

40 **THE HI'O CEREMONY**
Thomas F. Johnston

42 **JOHNNY HARRIS OF SANDON**
Norman M. Carter

50 **NORTHERN BOOKS**

COVER: A cobweb at sunrise by Silvija Ulmanis

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The Enigma of Sir George Simpson

By John S. Galbraith

Dr Galbraith, Professor of History, University of California, has devoted years of research to the life and career of Sir George Simpson. His book 'The Little Emperor' appeared in April of this year.

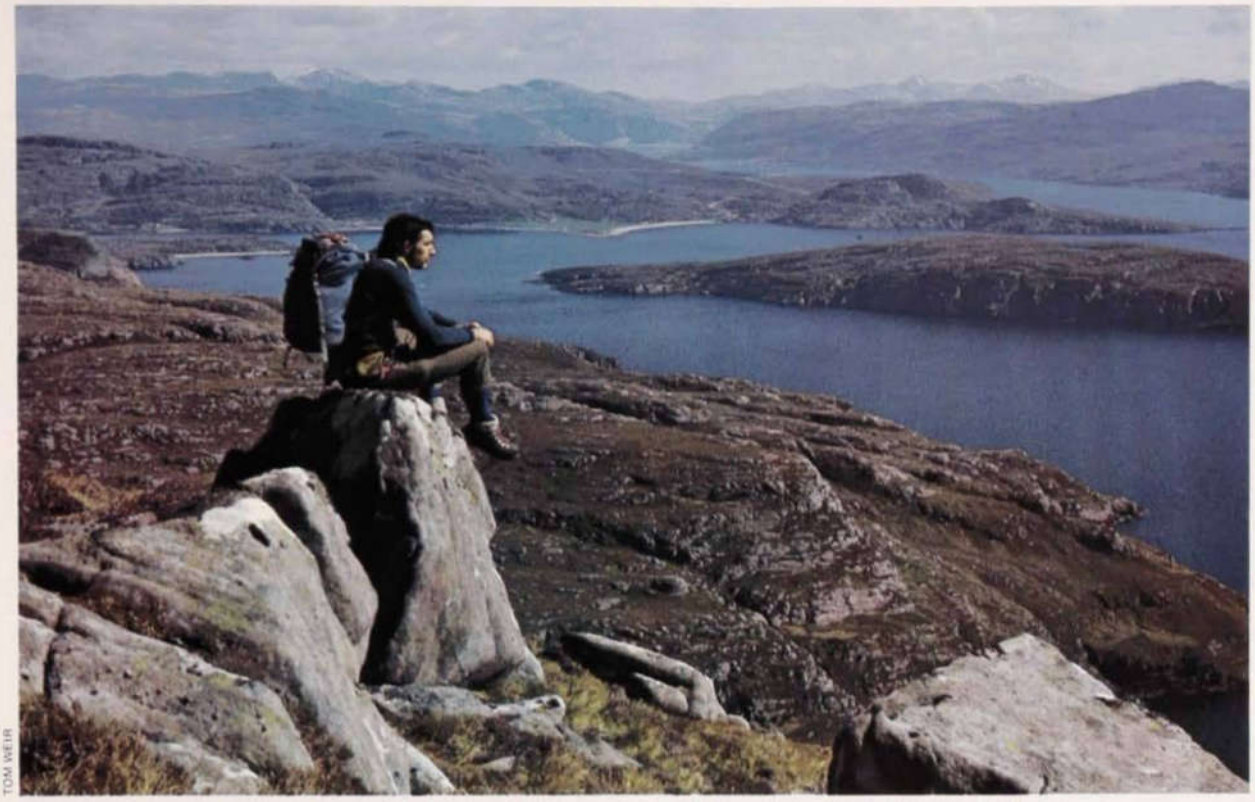
The Reverend Thomas Simpson, grandfather of Sir George, was minister of the parish of Avoch, a small agricultural community in Scotland distinguished by the ancient Fortrose Cathedral (below).

TOM WEIR

IN THE HISTORY OF THE FUR TRADE no one was more renowned than Sir George Simpson. For almost forty years he dominated the Hudson's Bay Company's operations in North America to such an extent that he became known as the 'Little Emperor of the Plains'. His remarkable business ability combined with an even more remarkable energy and drive made him one of the great business leaders of the nineteenth century. In *The Great Fur Opera,* jointly produced by Ronald Searle and Kildare Dobbs to mark the Company's tercentenary, Simpson was a leading performer. Dobbs maintained that compared to Simpson, 'other empire builders were mere pussy-cats' and expressed puzzlement that he had never received the public attention accorded to such luminaries as Cecil John Rhodes and the Duke of Wellington. Given the hyperbole with which the humorist is allowed to adorn truth, the comment is well made.

Why should Sir George Simpson, who played such a prominent part in the history of North America, be so little noticed by posterity? The answer is certainly not that he was a 'pawky little bantam'. Napoleon was not in a class with Sir George as a physical specimen. Rhodes, despite the terms of his bequest to the Rhodes scholarships emphasizing athletic ability as well as brains, was no athlete himself; indeed he could not be compared with Simpson, whose feats of endurance became a legend of the fur trade. Or was it that Simpson, unlike Wellington, fought no memorable pitched battles? Simpson indeed did not confront a Napoleon, and despite a nature which was essentially combative his victories were usually achieved by tact and guile rather than by physical force. Perhaps the answer is in his being associated with business enterprise, and 'business' is inherently dull. But the Hudson's Bay Company over whose operations he presided was no ordinary business. It was an important political force. The Company's presence involved the United States and Great Britain in a conflict which threatened war, and Simpson was centrally involved in these issues of high policy. The relative lack of attention to Sir George Simpson in comparison with other movers and shakers of the nineteenth century can be attributed to his own passion for privacy more than to any other cause.

Simpson sought recognition by his peers and by those he regarded as his betters. His entertainment of the Prince of Wales in the last days of his life he undoubtedly considered his crowning achievement. He had no interest, however, in the notoriety which is so often pursued by the famous and the would-be famous. On the contrary he was dedicated to protecting the privacy of his personal life. His business correspondence preserved in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company is prodigious. Readers who go through this enormous mass of letters and dispatches marvel that one man could have been able to write so much in his own hand and still have the time to devote to thinking about the multifarious problems with which he had to deal. Compared to



TOM WEIR

Simpson was successful in concealing many facts of his birth and childhood. It is believed that he was born in the Loch Broom area of Ross-shire, Scotland (above), between 1786 and 1791.

this enormous mass his personal correspondence is minuscule. Was this merely a consequence of his dedication to business? The answer, I think, is emphatically 'no'. Simpson throughout his life jealously guarded his private life. Acutely conscious of his illegitimate birth, he provided his contemporaries and future historians with little information on which to base their judgements of him as a person rather than as a phenomenon.

Of his youth practically nothing is known. Simpson did his best to conceal the facts of his early life, and fate co-operated with him. The editor of *Dodd's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage* repeatedly tried to get from Simpson details of his family and birth, and was finally forced to include a 'biography' which gave no more than the governor's name, position, and residence.

Subsequent investigators, myself included, have been frustrated in their efforts to acquire information on his early years. Almost as if he were in league with the powers of darkness as his opponents (and some of his admirers) believed, there is a hiatus in the parish records of Loch Broom in Ross-shire, Scotland, for the period during which Simpson could have been born. I was elated to find Simpson listed in the Canadian census of 1851, with his age given as 55. But this euphoria soon passed when I found that Simpson was in England at the time and that the source of the information was almost certainly a person who had no direct knowledge. The register of passengers on the *Caledonia* when it docked in Boston in 1841 lists Simpson as a passenger and gives his age as 50. That would make Simpson's date of birth 1790 or 1791. But there can be no assurance that Simpson was the source for the age given; it may have been his secretary, E. M. Hopkins, who was also on board. His gravestone and the records of Christ Church Cathedral in Montreal give his age at his death in 1860 as 73, which would make his date of birth in late 1786 or in 1787. But this information may not be correct. Obviously in a biography, it is of fundamental importance to know whether the subject was 34 or 24 when he became involved in matters of moment as did Simpson in the Athabasca campaign of 1820.

Uncertainty as to the date of Simpson's birth is followed by ignorance about his youth. Aside from a few letters from him to the Pooler family, there is little direct evidence of his life before he entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1820. How does a biographer deal with a subject whose first 34 (or 24) years were unknown? Simpson's biographers have used their imaginations to fill the void. Arthur S.

Morton, on whom subsequent writers have usually relied, tells of Simpson's birth in 'wild and for the most part desolate Ross-shire.' His father, the eldest son of the Reverend Thomas Simpson, minister of the parish of Avoch, was unable to care for the child, and 'at some stage of his infancy or boyhood' young George was taken across 'the wild mountains of Ross-shire' to the grandfather's manse in the quiet little village of Avoch, situated on the Moray Firth across the Inverness. He grew up as a member of his grandfather's family. A subsequent writer describes George's life at the manse thus:

> '. . . there he grew up, youngest of a family of eight, and lively, the special care of his young aunt, Mary Simpson, and with no sense of the inferiority which his birth might well have stamped upon him.'

This account of a loving family taking the youngster to its collective bosom is charming but unfortunately largely untrue. Thomas Simpson died in September 1786 and another pastor occupied the manse at the earliest date any writer has assigned for George Simpson's birth. The family scattered and eventually – precisely when is not established – he became the special care of his aunt Mary and it was almost certainly under her auspices that he received his education in Dingwall.

This chair bearing the Simpson crest 'Alis Nutrior' is one of a set that belonged to Sir George Simpson.

Another 'fact' given authority by repetition is that Simpson moved to London in 1809. The basis for this assertion is not indicated, and its accuracy is highly suspect. Simpson in 1809 would have been from 17 to 23 years old, depending on which of the most commonly assigned birth dates is accepted. Simpson must have left school in Dingwall by the time he was 13 or 14. There was no scope for his abilities in Dingwall, and unless he found employment in some other city before setting out for London, he probably came to London much earlier than 1809.

In writing a biography of Simpson, it is not enough to produce evidence that other writers have been in error. What is needed is positive information on his private as well as his public life, and Simpson was remarkably successful in ensuring that his private life would remain so. In his long public life Simpson had many acquaintances but few friends. Acquaintances generally considered him affable; officers in the fur trade relied upon him to invest their money, to find suitable schools for their children, to act for them in a myriad of ways, but their relationship with him was like that with the grand seigneur. His public correspondence on Company business was immense, but was devoted entirely to his professional life. Among the great mass of his letters only a few survive which reveal Simpson the man rather than the governor. Most notable of these are his letters during his early years with the Company when he expressed himself unreservedly to his friend John George McTavish. In these letters concerning such intimate subjects as their relationships with mixed-blood women and, later, their search for proper wives, Simpson was uncharacteristically indiscreet. He trusted McTavish as apparently he trusted no other man; he expected McTavish to keep his confidences and he assumed that McTavish would follow his injunction to burn these letters. Fortunately for history, unfortunately for McTavish's reputation, he did not honour Simpson's request. Another collection of personal letters, to Chief Factor Angus Cameron and his nephew and namesake, the man who became Simpson's son-in-law, have been brought to light by Elaine Mitchell. This correspondence extending over the period 1826-1860 reveals a Simpson with a warm personal interest in the two Camerons, but he showed much less of himself than he had in his correspondence with McTavish.

Aside from McTavish and, to some extent, the Camerons, the only person towards whom Simpson unburdened himself was his wife. Throughout most of their married life Frances was in ill health. When a year after their marriage it appeared that she might die with their yet unborn first child, Simpson was beside himself. He could not bear the thought of losing her: 'I am more miserable about her than words can tell, if an evil should

Lady Frances Simpson, from an oil painting owned by Mrs. M. Porritt.

The Simpson home at Lachine. 'But I am sure you would not like it – there is nothing to recommend this place', Frances Simpson wrote to her cousin George W. Simpson in 1846.

happen I shall be the most wretched man in existence as my whole heart and love are bound up in her.' She recovered and the child, George Geddes, was born in January 1832, but the parents' joy was short-lived. Three months later the child died, and Simpson and his wife were devastated. After a few days he was finally able to write a poignant letter to McTavish: 'This poor child was the idol of our hearts. We doted on him. We lived but for him.' Simpson's affection for Frances and their children was unquestionably genuine and profound. A set of verses in his handwriting, which appeared in Hopkins's book of canoe songs, expresses passion for his beloved, his 'own Blue Bell'.

This tenderness, however, was for a person whom he treated as a priceless possession, like a delicate piece of porcelain. Nineteenth-century husbands were often autocrats; Simpson was more autocratic than most; and Frances's continuing ill-health might well have related to her subjection to a regimen that stifled her self-expression. She detested Canada, and she hated Rupert's Land, but as the wife of Governor Simpson she had to endure an environment which drained away her vitality. She was heartsick for England, but she could not communicate her deep unhappiness to a mate many years her senior who believed that he was giving her everything a woman could desire. A letter Frances wrote to her cousin, G. W. Simpson (Georgy), gives a considerable insight into her mental state in 1846, a year after Simpson had brought her back from England to Lachine:

> I think I need scarcely assure you that nothing would give me greater delight than to have you near me, but you know dear Georgy how often we have talked over LaChine, and all its disagreeables, and believe me it is not a few, and I cannot wish you to come much as I long to see you – The situation offered you is an arduous one, for the writing is incessant, and there are few comforts here to balance the many discomforts – Nevertheless, should you have nothing more inviting in prospect, I would not say decline it –
>
> While here, it would indeed be a delight to me to see you, tho' the rules of this Establishment are so strict that we could not meet so often as I would wish – Still it would be a pleasure and comfort to know you were under the same roof, and we should at all events meet oncé a day, at Breakfast time – But I am sure you would not like it – there is nothing to recommend this place, tho' perhaps since you have been in Norway, you have in some degree weaned from the many comforts & delights of home.
>
> But I must not say more upon this subject – Should we meet, I shall have much to say to you, and I hope you will write to me soon, & tell me all your feelings upon this matter, and your future plans, for believe me everything that relates to you, however trifling, is regarded by me with interest, for I can never forget dear Georgy, all yr affectionate kindness, nor the many happy hours we have passed together, in days gone by –
>
> We lead a very quiet life just now, seldom going beyond the door, & I suppose shall be so until George's return – But when he is here, he is so well known to every body that we have constant invitations to go out, or else people here – which breaks the monotony of the life we live. But I shall never like the country nor the people, & long more & more every day to return –'

Letters like these are few; the biographer derives from them some tantalizing glimpses of a man whose public

Governor George Simpson on a tour of inspection. 'it is . . . strange' he wrote to J. G. McTavish 'that all my ailments vanish as soon as I seat myself in a canoe.' From a painting by L. L. FitzGerald.

career is among the best documented of the great business leaders of the nineteenth century, but whose inner characteristics have remained an enigma to posterity as they did to his contemporaries.

Another aspect of his life on which not enough is known is the precise nature of the illnesses which periodically plagued him. The first recorded ailment during his service with the Company was a sore throat from which he suffered at York Factory in 1821 and again at Norway House. The amateur physician of the fur trade diagnosed his trouble as the 'quinsy', and the treatment at Norway House nearly killed him. A clerk mistook a bottle of nitric acid for hartshorn and poured the solution on a piece of flannel which he wrapped around Simpson's throat. The results were predictable; the acid charred the flannel and removed the skin from Simpson's neck. The only mystery here is why the clerk was so incompetent as to make such a stupid mistake — sore throats are the common lot of most of humanity.

Simpson's later illnesses are not so easy to explain. Despite his rugged constitution he was from time to time felled. After his journey to the Columbia in 1828-1829 Simpson experienced continuing fatigue which gave him great concern, and he decided to go back to England for medical advice. Though he was no older than 43, the Simpson who arrived in Liverpool in 1830 thought of himself as in his declining years. He arrived in London a semi-invalid, who had to be confined for days to his room, so weak that he could not walk. He was suffering, he thought, from a 'determination of blood to the head'. The debility was not constant. On occasion he felt a renewed surge of energy, but then the lassitude would return. The physician had no idea as to the cause of his condition, but he applied a common remedy of

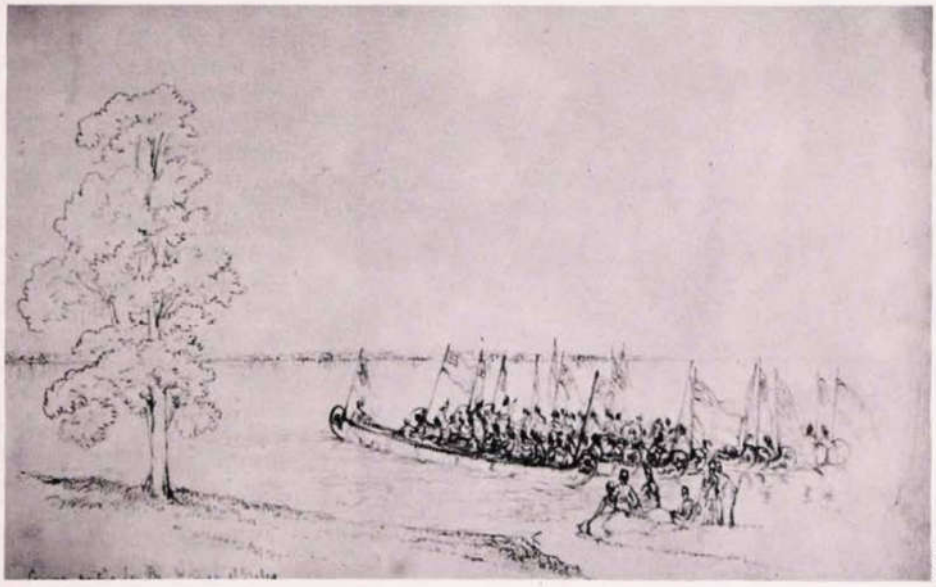
bleedings and leeches, rather a strange prescription for a person suffering from an 'insufficiency of blood'. These treatments were at least in part at Simpson's own behest. This devastating illness beset Simpson on several occasions thereafter in the 1840s and 1850s, and finally caused his death in 1860. Little can be known precisely of what the illness was from the mere labels applied to it; 'apoplectic seizure' and 'stroke' were the vague terms used in describing it. It would perhaps provide a valuable insight into Simpson's character if the precise nature of these seizures could be known.

Compounding his problems was an affliction to his eyes that seriously affected his ability to read. The ailment first struck him after he returned to North America from his visit to England in 1833, leaving his wife who had not recovered her health after the death of their child. The ailment became worse, but it came and went. And most remarkably, it did not seriously affect his vision out of doors. He wrote to his friend McTavish, 'it is . . . strange that all my ailments vanish as soon as I seat myself in a canoe.'

The best documentation we have of Simpson's infirmities is on his last illness, since the nature of his mental state became an issue in a court case. On the way from Montreal to his home in Lachine on 1 September 1860, he suffered another attack of apoplexy. He was rushed to his residence where for the next six days he lay alternating from delirium to apparent calm and lucidity. In one of his quiet intervals he directed his secretary Hopkins to draw up generous cheques to several people, including Hopkins. At his death, the executors refused to honour the cheques, maintaining that he was not of sound mind at the time he had authorized them. One of the beneficiaries sued, and medical experts, including the three attending physicians, were called upon to give testimony. They were divided both on the precise nature of his disease and on the question as to whether he was at any time rational in his last six days. Since no autopsy was performed, the issue of the disease which killed Sir George Simpson remained moot.

I have emphasized some of the problems which frustrate a biographer attempting to understand the person who was Sir George Simpson. There is ample testimony from those who knew him as the governor.

Many men hated Simpson for his alleged arbitrariness and autocracy in actions which injured them; many more praised him as a virtuoso of the managerial art who, despite his heavy responsibilities, still could always find the time to give them wise counsel. Few, if any, came to know the private person who lived behind the partition he had erected to keep out the outside world. In the sketch of Simpson, I have published this year I have tried to make an assessment of the inner man despite this paucity of evidence. The portrait I have painted is not entirely flattering. In many respects Simpson was a small man; he was capable of meanness; yet at the same time he could be warm and generous. All people have inner contradictions; in Simpson's case the contradictions are compounded by the mystery with which he chose to invest his personal life. The judgment which I and others have made of his business talents is beyond rebuttal – he was a great business leader who contributed much to his Company and to British North America. The judgment of his attributes as a person must remain less confident. Simpson has succeeded in preserving the enigma surrounding the man who performed for so many years as the 'Little Emperor'. ◆



Simpson would have considered the visit of the Prince of Wales on 29 August 1860 to his summer home on Isle Dorval to be his crowning social achievement. Here, in a sketch by Frances Anne Hopkins, an escort of fur-trade canoes sets out to meet the Prince. Simpson died several days later.

Between the summit of the Rocky Mountains and Lake of the Woods, Canada's southern boundary stretches for 860 miles in an unbroken arc along the 49th parallel. Along this strategic line are 639 precisely placed cast-iron monuments. Fred Fulford, now 86 and living in Ottawa, recalls how he spent five summers as a two-dollar-a-day monument setter with a crew that located and re-marked this international boundary across the prairie frontier from 1908-12.

Robert Lee Jewett, vice-president and creative director of the Bill Sandy motion picture company, is author and journalist whose work focuses on Canadian and U.S. history of the early 20th century.

Recollections of a Monument Setter

By Frederick M. J. Fulford
As told to Robert Lee Jewett

Fred Fulford of Ottawa recalls his summers as a monument setter.

'In 1907 – I was 17 – and our family doctor told me I needed to get outside and get some exercise to build me up. I was over six foot and only 135 pounds. I'd quit school and was clerking in a dry goods store in Ottawa.

'My Dad, a bush farmer across the Ottawa River near Hull, happened to know J. J. McArthur who was Chief Surveyor with the Canadian party surveying the international boundary. I went to see Mr McArthur. He told me I could start in the spring. He promised me I'd be working outside, getting lots of exercise and fresh air, sleeping in tents.

'In March of 1908 I quit my job at the dry goods store, got my belongings together and took the C P R main line west. I was to join the survey crew at Coutts, Alberta. It was my first time away from my mother and father and four brothers and three sisters.'

In 1818, Britain and the United States agreed on the 49th parallel as the boundary line from Lake of the Woods west to the Rocky Mountains. It was not until 1875 that a thorough survey was completed of the plains section and markers placed along the line.

While some markers were cast-iron posts, others were nothing more than mounds of earth or rock cairns, and

P.A.C.

The marking of the first boundary line across the prairie was completed in 1875. By 1908 the earth mounds, like the one being built above, had deteriorated until they were scarcely recognizable.

by 1908, they had deteriorated so greatly that they were scarcely recognizable.

At the turn of the century when the great push west was gaining momentum, monuments of a more conspicuous and permanent character were needed – and at more frequent intervals. In April the treaty of 1908 was signed between the United States and the United Kingdom agreeing to a 'more complete definition and demarcation of the international boundary'. That spring, on 10 May, the re-marking of the western plains boundary was begun at Coutts, Alberta by the Canadian Party under Chief J. J. McArthur.

'We started a little west of Coutts, at a rock cairn marker [later Monument 331] and ran the boundary between Coutts and Sweetgrass, Montana. It really was one small town: a general store and railroad station in Coutts, and a bar with a pool table in Sweetgrass. When our crew surveyed the line, it ran right across the Coutts station platform. We painted a white line down the platform and kept on going.

'We ran into a couple of pieces of bad luck that first year out. To begin with, we didn't have any monuments to mark the boundary with. I heard they were being made in Nova Scotia, 2,500 miles away, when they could have been made a lot closer, say in Winnipeg. Politics, I guess. Anyway, we never got any monuments in 1908. We just marked the places where they were supposed to go.

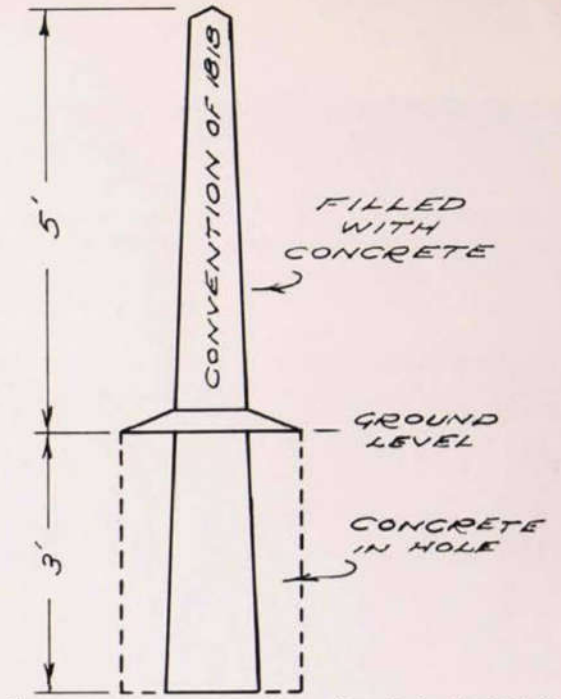
'Next thing, it rained so hard and so long that every river and creek and piece of low ground in that part of Alberta flooded. We moved our tents to high ground and waited it out. After days and days the rain finally quit and the water went down. We got our gear dried out in the sun, then the mosquitoes came out. They filled the air like grit in a sand storm. Between calming the horses, swatting the bugs, and picking them out of our food and water, we spent more time on mosquitoes than we did on our boundary work.

'But gradually we moved east, setting up camp every ten miles or so. There were maybe 20 or 22 men in the crew, most of them in their early twenties. The survey teams were college lads but one, Jack Sheppard, was in his thirties, and a top-notch surveyor. He had two saddle horses and rode on ahead to survey the high places. I heard later that Jack Sheppard's brother was a surveyor on the Yukon border and had fallen off Bird Mountain into a crevasse. They say they never found him. That was in 1909. We had life easy compared with the crews working along the Yukon border.

'During my first two years, while we were working the Alberta-Montana section, the food was great. Thick, juicy steaks every day. We had an arrangement with the Milk River Cattle Company that we could shoot and eat any steer wearing their brand. When we shot one, we estimated the steer's weight, then cut off the strip of hide with the brand on it. We then mailed the brand to the Milk River headquarters with an estimate of the weight and a money order at so much per pound, next time we got near a town with a post office.

'I used to wonder why the cattlemen trusted us so much, estimating the weight and all – until I watched a cattle drive moving up to Lethbridge. We calculated there were over 90,000 head in that herd. It took hours for it to pass where we were working. I guess they didn't worry too much about what it took to feed our little group.

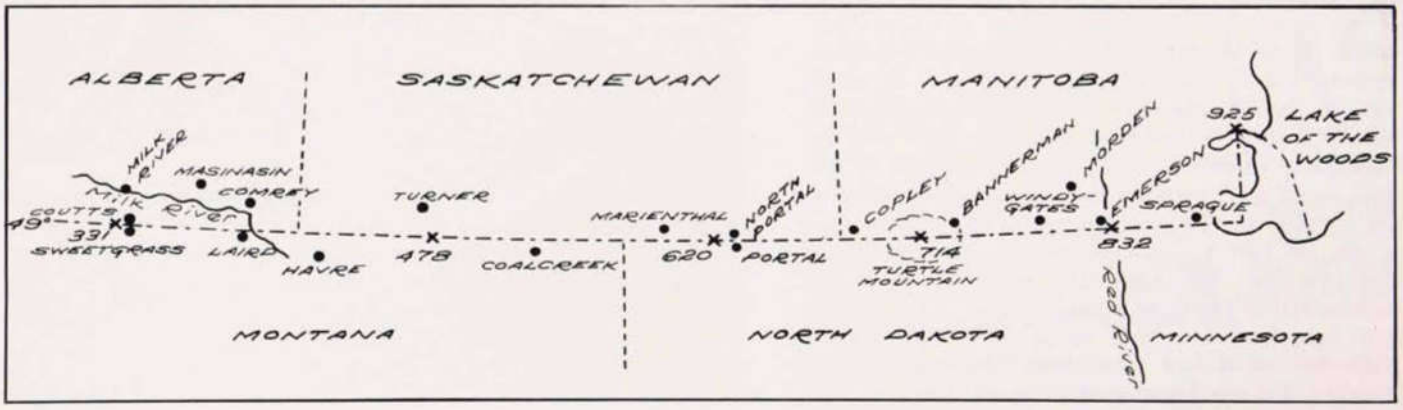
'Besides the good meals, the scenery was beautiful. Lovely, rolling ground. From the Sweetgrass Hills, a



The cast-iron monument used in marking the border 1908-12.

GLENBOW-ALBERTA INSTITUTE

Part of a round-up by the Milk River Cattle Company near Pendant d'Oreille, Alberta in 1911.



INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

Members of the Canadian party setting a cast-iron boundary monument on the prairies.

couple of dozen miles east of Coutts and Sweetgrass, on a bright, sunny morning we could see the sun shining on the [Waterton] glacier in the Rockies, over 100 miles away.

'By the end of September, 1908, we had worked east 100 miles. Then we drew our pay and went home. I got two dollars for each day worked, six days a week. I went back to Ottawa with muscles on my bones and money in my pockets. That winter I worked in an Ottawa dry-goods store. The surveyors spent the winter making maps. The following April, I headed west again.

'We split the crew at the start of 1909. The survey party went ahead to where we'd finished the past year and started sighting and staking the boundary east from there. The monument crew began setting out the monuments back where we'd started the year before, west of Coutts. We found the stakes we'd driven, dug a hole exactly two feet square and three feet deep. Every hole had to be exactly this size.

'The monuments were cast-iron, about eight feet tall, and square, three or four inches wide at the top and twelve inches wide at the bottom flange [which rested on the surface of the ground]. They were hollow and weighed almost 300 pounds. We filled the monument with cement, dropped it into the hole, then filled the hole with cement and gravel. We took another sighting on the monument, got it exactly on the boundary line, and let it harden in place.'

Fulford's crew set monuments every mile and a half to two miles along that section. Each monument had raised lettering: the west face read 'Convention of 1818', the east face 'Treaty of 1908', the north face 'Canada', and on the south 'United States'. The monument numbers were not added until all of the monuments were set and inspected.

In a few places, the old boundary posts set out in 1875 still survived, sometimes exactly on the line as the crew re-surveyed it. These were cast-iron posts identical to the new ones, except for the lettering. When they were in good condition, the men dried out the oak posts used instead of cement to strengthen them, pulled out the oak and poured in the cement. Then they dropped the same monument back into place.

'It was nice going, working our way across Alberta. About the only trouble we had was finding stones on the prairie to make gravel for the cement. Sometimes we had to ride for miles for rocks, then break them up for gravel.

'We did have a little trouble getting the boundary across the Milk River that year. It was flooded and had a quicksand bottom. One of our crew, Joe Perrier, was driving a team hitched to a hayrack-type of wagon with our gear on it. Joe made the mistake of not giving the horses a drink at the edge of the water before starting across. So when he got well out into the stream they stopped for a drink. The wagon began to sink, fast, and so did the horses.

'We had to do some quick stepping to get another team roped to the wagon from the far side of the stream. We almost lost the whole works.

'The boundary crosses the Milk at several places, and each one was a tough crossing. At one of them I

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

Wagons and horses (wearing bags to protect them from the 'nose flies' of the prairies) cross the Souris River near the International Boundary.

dropped a monument on the first finger of my right hand and smashed it. It healed up, but it still clicks when I bend it.

'We set monuments that summer of 1909 all the way from Coutts to Frenchman Creek, about 200 miles. I heard there was a United States survey team up ahead of us, but we never saw them, that year or any of the following years. We leap-frogged along the boundary from then on, each team handling about a 100-mile stretch. But we never saw each other.

'We had a United States observer with our party. His name was [F.D.] Granger and he was a short fellow with a white mustache and a Vandyke beard – very proper. He drove a lovely team on a democrat and watched closely to see that we positioned the monuments exactly right.

'The boundary ran along a curved line, the 49th parallel. But the surveyors could only survey straight lines. So Mr Granger would show me what the offset was: just how far off the straight line the monument should sit to put it on the curved line, usually two to three inches off.

'We worked every day but Sunday, and spent that day doing our washing, writing home, pitching horseshoes and playing baseball. We now and then played a local small-town team on Sunday afternoon. I pitched, and wasn't too bad, for a left-hander.

'One of the things that surprises me, as I recollect those five summers, is that we never had any fist fights. Either the men were just too tired most of the time, or we all respected Mr McArthur too much. I don't know which. But there were no fights.'

The Chief of the Canadian party, James Joseph McArthur, was always 'Mr' McArthur to the survey crew, Fred Fulford recalls. He was a man who had earned and demanded respect and loyalty. He had commanded survey teams along the rough Yukon boundary, had worked eastward through the Cascades and Rockies. Now he was moving towards the completion of his mission at Lake of the Woods.

An impressive figure with long white hair and military bearing, as Fulford recalls him, he was in the saddle each morning watching every detail of the survey and the monument setting. He allowed no hard liquor in camp and tolerated no malingering. McArthur pushed the Canadian survey team through to its destination, then went home to Ottawa to record his findings. His achievements were rewarded in 1917 when he was appointed His Britannic Majesty's Commissioner in charge of Canadian affairs on the International Boundary Commission, a post he held until 1924.

By November 1900, when Fred Fulford drew his pay and went back east, McArthur's team was 80 miles into Saskatchewan. They ended their work at Monument 478, then moved their equipment east to Marienthal, Saskatchewan, to be ready for the next season.

By 8 May 1910 Fulford was back on the 49th working eastward from Monument 620, about ten miles west of North Portal, Saskatchewan, then a town of 220 people. The Canadian team covered 138 miles that summer, to the eastern slope of the Turtle Mountains.

It was a summer of strange extremes. Although it was one of the hottest and driest prairie summers the survey team would encounter, it was also one of the coldest up

in the mountains: on 25 July, the hardy mountain folk of tiny Painter, Montana, reported a temperature of only five degrees above zero. That low reading remains unbroken in the record books to this day.

'That summer of 1910 was so hot on the prairie we burned our fingers on the iron monuments. It dried up the water holes and cracked the canvas on our tents. We couldn't sleep and finally we couldn't eat.

'We had been killing beef to eat. But as fast as we killed a steer the meat spoiled and we'd have to bury it. Finally, they began sending us canned salmon, figuring we could eat that until the weather broke. Well, it never cooled off and we ate canned salmon morning, noon, and night the rest of the summer.

'To this day I can't stand salmon. I wouldn't give a nickel for a carload of it.'

The season was so dry that prairie fires were a constant threat. The United States team, working well east of the Canadian party, was delayed repeatedly by smoke from large fires, some as distant as 350 miles. One such fire, in the Rainy River country, wiped out the towns of Baudette and Spooner, Minnesota, with a loss of 42 lives.

As Fulford's party moved into the Turtle Mountain area, more and more forested sections were encountered. Because each monument had to be visible from the ones immediately to the east and the west of it, a great swath had to be cut through the trees and underbrush.

'We had to leave a clear skyline twenty feet wide at the top of the trees. This was so you could look back down a rise in the ground and see the border through the trees. To get that twenty-foot skyline in the top branches, we had to clear away as much as a one-hundred-foot wide path of trees on the ground. The wood was mostly white birch, so tough that our axes bounced right off it.'

A surveyor carried a theodolite and a variety of other instruments as he sighted and marked the boundary east along the 49th parallel during the summers of 1908-12.

P.A.C.

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

By 1911, the crews were working east across land settled by European families near the International Boundary in southern Manitoba.

As the survey team moved through Manitoba, more and more small towns were found within five or ten miles of the border: Copley, Lyleton, Mowbray, Bannerman, and Windygates and Wakeham, both with ten people in 1910.

'All the way across Alberta and Saskatchewan we were completely alone. We never even saw a border patrol, Canadian or American. They were supposed to be out there to make sure nobody came within thirty feet of the boundary, except at customs stations. But we never saw an RCMP patrol during 1908 and 1909.

'By 1910 we cut between more and more homesteader farms. Small towns were an easy ride from the boundary when we needed supplies. We weren't in the wilderness anymore.'

The Canadian party finished work 7 November, when Fred Fulford and his crew set Monument 714 near where the International Peace Garden is today.

The following spring, the team was out earlier than usual to pick up where they had left off. Fulford got a promotion that year, to boss of the five-man monument-setting crew. His pay went from $2.00 a day to $2.50 a day. By mid-April they were working down the eastern slope of the Turtle Mountains, cutting through the brush and timber and planting monuments every couple of miles. They worked across the area where many Russian Mennonite familes had settled, spreading south from

MANITOBA GOVERNMENT

The rock cairn marker on the boundary at the International Peace Garden near Boissevain, Manitoba. It proclaims: 'We two nations dedicate this and pledge ourselves that as long as men shall live we will not take up arms against one another.'

Winnipeg in the wake of their advance echelons of 1874, 1875 and 1876.

'We saw entire families working in the fields. The women worked the hardest of the lot. They were good farmers.

'We kidded some of the Mennonites, telling the farmers on the north side of the boundary that we were running the line north of their farms, that they'd be in the U.S. And telling their neighbours, actually American citizens, that the new line would be in Canada.

'It started as a simple joke; but the story got to a reporter for the *Winnipeg Free Press* and he wrote an article saying a lot of honest farmers were going to end up in the wrong country. Mr McArthur got wind of it and made us straighten it all out, with the Mennonites and with the *Free Press*. He didn't like jokes; and I guess in this case he was right.'

During the three years of cutting and marking their way across the western prairies, about the worst hardship Fred Fulford's crew had faced was canned salmon for three meals a day. Then in the summer of 1911 typhoid stopped the survey party in a cold sweat, southeast of Morden, Manitoba.

'We had been drinking dirty water from sloughs all the way across the prairies. It wasn't clear, pretty water, but it was healthy. In Manitoba we took to carrying our water from farm wells and some of it wasn't too clean.

'Every man in our party except the two cooks came down with typhoid. I guess the cooks were smart enough to boil the water. Or maybe they were drinking something else. Anyway, the rest of us ended up in Morden in the hospital, some for as long as eight weeks. A few went home when they got out, being too weak to work. I was in three weeks, then went back to the boundary camp.

'I remember the exact day I left the hospital: September 23, 1911. That's the day we heard that Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his Liberal party had been defeated on reciprocity.

'When we got back on the job we were four weeks behind schedule. By the time we reached the Red River, it was frozen over solid. To give the horses a drink, we took them out to the middle and cut a hole in the ice. Two of the men had sleeping bags, because they had worked the Yukon section. The rest of us were issued extra horse blankets. We bought some stoves, but with temperatures well below zero the canvas tents lost the heat faster than the stoves could push it out. We worked twice as hard as we did during the summer, to keep from freezing.'

The survey team finished their assignment on November 10 and headed home. Because of the lateness of their departure, they had to return east through Minneapolis, Minnesota, and across Michigan's upper peninsula. The CPR line around the north shore of Lake Superior was buried under the snow.

'In March of 1912 we rode the CPR down to Kenora, at the north end of Lake of the Woods. From there we took flat-bottom boats down the lake to the boundary point at the southwest corner. We had just about the same crew we'd had the year before. It was still bitter cold and there were big chunks of ice in the water.

'We were driving steel posts, not setting monuments. The U.S. party would do that later. The posts had been brought in by sled during the winter, when the lake and swamps along the shore were frozen. We worked our way along the lake and across some islands, surveying and driving posts. They were about two feet high and a couple of inches square.'

That summer Fred Fulford worked into August of 1912 marking the boundary along its 26.7-mile course northward to the Northwest Angle Inlet of Lake of the Woods. And with that, the boundary was marked, all the way from the Pacific to Lake of the Woods. The last monument was number 925.

The joint Canada-U.S. Boundary Commission – formed on a temporary basis in 1906 and made permanent in 1925 – now and then sends out a field party to relocate a monument disturbed by construction work, or to reclear the vista through the trees. But the major task of marking the boundary across the western plains in a permanent way was done in those five summers of fresh air and exercise that remain firmly etched in the memory of Fred Fulford. ◆

The First Printmaking Year at Baker Lake

Personal Recollections

By Sheila Butler

FIRST ARRIVAL IN THE ARCTIC can be a disconcerting experience – as unreal as a dream of flying to the moon.

In the summer of 1969 my husband, Jack, agreed to accept, on a temporary basis, the appointment as craft officer to the Eskimo community of Baker Lake, 1,000 miles north of Winnipeg. On July 1, he and I and our five-year-old daughter arrived in Baker Lake and, save for the fact that we three could huddle together, we would have been blown like straws in the wind and would very likely have made a hurried departure.

Just the experience of changing in Churchill from a normal southern flight with standard passenger seats and smiling stewardesses to a genuine WW II DC3 with a few seats for the paying passengers – the rest of the space taken up with cargo, cases of bread and apples, oil drums which made loud and unsettling noises upon take-off and landing, all tied down with large ropes; the pilot a harried-looking gentleman in an old leather sheep-collared bomber jacket which obviously was of the same vintage year as the aircraft; the 'stewardess' a teen-age boy who helped to sling aboard the mail bags and other cargo and later brought us paper cups of instant coffee or pop – gave us the ominous feeling that we had bitten off more than we could chew, and in a way, we had.

Sheila Butler and her husband, Jack, have been advisers to the Baker Lake art and crafts program for seven years.

'Celebration': a stone cut by artist H. Kigusiuq and printer Iksiraq. Prints are from the Butler collection and are reproduced with permission of the Sanavik Co-operative Association.

The only other passengers on the flight from Churchill to Baker were some construction workers who had obviously plied themselves with strong spirits in order to withstand the rigours of the journey. One voice in particular rose in argument with a fellow passenger so that several minutes before our landing in Eskimo Point, the previously described harried pilot had to come back and threaten to radio ahead to the R.C.M.P. Fortunately the threat was sufficient deterrent and the trip proceeded uneventfully until we at last climbed out onto the wind-swept gravel pad used as a summer landing strip in Baker Lake. We were met by the Acting Area Administrator for the federal department, Jerry Tanner. He loaded us into a truck for the short run into 'town' and introduced us to one of the local nurses and the R.C.M.P. officer who were also in the truck. All three of them welcomed us cordially and it was not until many months later that Jerry confessed that the pilot had radioed ahead to say that he had a potentially unruly passenger aboard. Baker Lake had experienced quite a succession of rather unfortunate craft officers and Jerry, expecting the worst, was sure that the 'unruly passenger' could be no other than the new craft officer, my husband, Jack Butler. So the R.C.M.P. officer and nurse, armed with a tranquillizing needle, had come prepared to wrestle Jack to the ground if necessary. By the time we heard this confession we had also heard the Eskimos recite their succession of craft officers in much the same way that I remembered reciting the succession of the Kings of England in a high school history class. 'One man drink too much and they take him out. One man draw a big penis on the side of his house and the nurses give him a shot and they take him out. One man punch his fist through the Area Administrator's door . . .' By the time we had put in our first winter in Baker the behaviour of the previous unfortunates sounded like quite rational responses to the cold, the isolation and the Kafkaesque frustrations of functioning in a government bureaucracy.

Fortunately in one area at least we were all prepared. We were both professionally-trained and practising painters and printmakers. And we had seen a great deal of Eskimo art and loved what we had seen. Our first introduction to visual work by Canadian Eskimos, Cape Dorset prints, came from Professor Douglas Wilson with whom we studied as undergraduates at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Under his excellent instruction we were enabled to enlarge our limited vision and to admire those forms of non-western art which have mistakenly been called 'primitive'. Later, in 1962 as a graduate student at the University of Illinois, my husband met Professor George Swinton who had come down from the University of Manitoba to search for new additions to join him on the faculty. My husband accepted Swinton's offer to his first teaching position and so we came to Winnipeg, which seemed the 'Far North' at that time, and at the same time a little closer to Eskimo art. We soon became acquainted with the Swinton collection of Eskimo sculpture and in 1964 we saw for the first time a show of original Cape Dorset prints, our previous experiences having been reproductions in books and catalogues. We were overwhelmed by the exhibition from which we purchased a small print of a walrus hunt by the artist Parr. Another large print which I remember clearly from that show in 1964 is a stencil image of a direct frontal view of a rabbit, 'Running Rabbit' by Pudlo, 1963. Previously I had never thought that such a complete and vivid image could be possible with simple stencil technique. The memory of this great print influenced me deeply as I began to work with the Baker Lake people to produce stencil prints of their own.

Our return to Canada in 1969 was again at the invitation of George Swinton. We had written telling him that we intended to try Canada again, this time with the idea of becoming Canadian citizens and of settling down permanently. We were considering Vancouver and we asked George to let us know of any employment possibilities that he might be aware of. Working for the industrial department of the federal department of Indian and Northern Affairs in the Arctic was one possibility we had not thought about. Baker Lake is a long way from Vancouver and we thought that we were going to Baker on a temporary basis, just to fill in until they found someone to take the position permanently.

In June 1969 George reported on our appointment to the Chairman of the Eskimo Arts Council, George Elliot, as follows:

> I also wish to report on my participation in securing a *temporary* projects officer for Baker Lake. Since this appointment is short-term only and the position needed to be filled on extremely short notice, I had no qualms about proceeding with as much speed as possible to contact the best possible prospect I know. The approach being personal (rather than formal), we were able to obtain my first choice. I hope we will prove to be effective.
>
> In the case of K. J. Butler, I undertook to prepare him for Baker Lake, spending a full 3½ days with him. Butler also received assistance from Ron Milligan. This type of 'training' was all that was possible under the very special circumstances. *A complete immersion programme of four to six weeks (including a crash course in basic Eskimo)* should be prepared for future permanent appointees.

In all the talk of hiring there was never any discussion of my role in the ensuing employment. We went to Baker knowing that we would work together on the project but at that point no one was willing to discuss the possibility of my being hired. Since we were intending to go to Baker only on a temporary basis until they found a permanent craft officer it did not seem worth arguing about. So for the first two months in Baker I worked without salary.

When the first group of prints was acclaimed by Canadian Eskimo Arts Council and we decided to stay in Baker, we were able to negotiate my hiring, but a

JACK BUTLER

A group of Baker Lake artists: Thomas Iksiraq, Luke Anguhadluq, Marion Tuu'luq, Jessie Oonark, Phillipa Aningrniq, in front of Anguhadluq's tent at the Prince River.

contract at much less than half Jack's salary was the best we could do – even though we shared the same duties, shared equal responsibility for aesthetic decisions and put in the same number of hours. My contract did not cover attendance at conferences in Churchill or Yellowknife and when it came time to attend openings of Baker Lake prints in southern cities, only Jack's way was paid. The conference issue was particularly troublesome. Since I was not able to negotiate my own contract in person without paying the return fare to Churchill my contract terms were discussed with my husband. There seemed to be nothing I could do except to accept this arrangement if I wanted to continue to work with the Baker Lake artists, and I did want to continue.

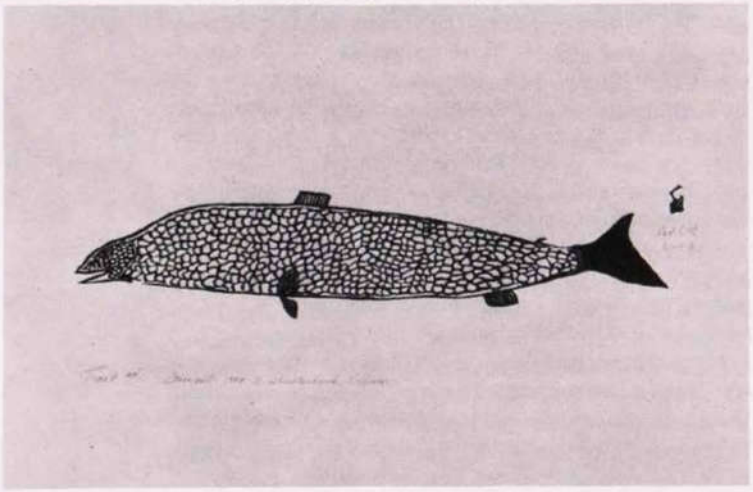
Our first summer in Baker was difficult although the first-hand contact with the Inuit artists was instantly rewarding. We had shipped a trunk of bedding and clothing, more than a month in advance of our departure from Pittsburgh. Naively we assured ourselves of its imminent arrival each day. Experienced Northerners know better than to expect any form of shipping or communication to function as planned and our lost trunk was our first lesson, although many more advanced lessons were soon to follow. We had not yet been reimbursed for our travel and so with dwindling funds we purchased some indispensable rubber boots for sloshing through the summer mud, some blankets (we did without sheets), and whatever food was available. No one had warned us about the summer sealift, but here again we learned a lesson. The Hudson's Bay Company store had only the strangest assortment of food items left at this time of year, because they were waiting for their annual stock of supplies which would soon come by sea during the one time of the year when ships have access to Baker Lake. The sympathetic nurses gave us some canned goods from the odds and ends left in the nursing station storeroom and we had peculiar meals of canned spinach, canned wieners, stale crackers and other oddments. By the end of July we had no margarine or butter, no canned or powdered milk, and no toilet paper, but lots of canned spinach.

My husband had purchased a parka in Winnipeg but my daughter and I waited vainly for our winter coats packed in our wandering trunk. Having come from the 95° swamp-like humidity of a Pittsburgh summer with air full of reddish iron-ore dust and sulphur fumes, the

Baker Lake summer felt chill. I then learned that sewing clothes is not just a romantic old Eskimo tradition but is still an indispensable part of arctic life. My child was cold, there were no children's parkas left at The Bay, it would take too long to order one from Winnipeg and I was too new on the scene to know any Inuit woman well enough to ask her to make one for me. So I borrowed an Eskimo-made child's pullover duffle parka, made a paper pattern from it, purchased some wool duffle cloth and a strip of fur from The Bay and somehow put together with hand stitching a rather lumpy little parka that seemed to ride up a bit strangely in the front. But it was warm and served well during that whole first winter in Baker. When my daughter grew out of it I gave it to an Eskimo family where it made the rounds for a couple of winters more.

We were at first mystified that so many of the 'white' houses were vacant and worse yet, for us, the craft shop was almost deserted too. We had not been aware that this was a community where many of the white residents, the entire staff of the school for instance, are away on holiday for all or much of the summer. Many of the Inuit families also leave the settlement to live on the land for the warmer months of the year. It was the worst time possible to come in and try to begin a new project. Fortunately we were too inexperienced to know this and so we began to spend all day every day in the shop, talking to anyone who came in, usually through the services of the secretary and interpreter, Betty Amarouk, who showed up one day, mercifully speaking English. She had worked with the previous craft officer and was somewhat reserved with us newcomers. We had no idea how she was interpreting our remarks to the few people who came in to sell carvings when they heard that some new 'Kabloonas' had opened the craft shop again.

The first Baker Lake stone-cut print was 'Trout' by artist Iksiktaaryuk and printer Kaluraq. Photographs of prints by Neil Campbell, Winnipeg.



The design for the stone-cut print 'Day Spirit'. Slabs of stone imported from southern Quebec are used at Baker Lake.

Having come from a big city we were at first alarmed by the appearance of many of the young Inuit. It was summer and many were wearing leather jackets and riding Hondas, looking to our urban eyes frighteningly similar to gangs we had seen on the streets of New York. Had we come all this way to get caught in the cross-fire of a 'rumble'? It did not take long to get beyond surface appearance to the astonishingly gentle nature of the people we were to work with and our fears subsided.

A few people at a time continued to drift into the shop, some to sell carvings, others just to have a look at the newcomers. Given the language barrier, the best way to raise interest in printmaking seemed to be to make some prints. So we rummaged through the odds and ends of supplies left from previous failed efforts to introduce printmaking to Baker Lake. We did not have everything we needed but using what came to hand, Jack started to make a stone cut and I started to make some stencil prints, using drawings from a few sketchbooks we found stored in the loft of the shop. The stencil technique is an exceedingly simple method which has since been used with great sensitivity by the Baker Lake people to produce astonishingly varied results. The stencils are cut from a heavy slightly transparent waxed paper. The stencil paper is placed over the drawing to be used. The drawing shows through the transparent stencil paper so the particular areas to be printed are traced with pencil onto the stencil paper. Then the drawing is removed and the traced areas or lines are cut out using an Exacto knife.

The original drawing of 'Day Spirit' by Oonark.

The print 'Day Spirit' reproduced from the Oonark drawing by printers Makpaaq and Amarook.

A separate stencil is cut for each colour in the drawing. To make the print, one stencil is placed over a sheet of printing paper on a flat surface and held in place with masking tape. The printing ink to be used is a lithograph ink especially processed for use in hand-done printing techniques. The colour is mixed on a glass palette and usually thinned slightly with turpentine. The colour is applied to the printing paper through the cut areas or lines of the stencil. The colour can be applied with a stiff short-bristled stencil brush, 'Animals' by Anguhadluq, Mannik. Very heavy application of ink can result in areas of flat strong colour, 'Woman' by Oonark, Mannik, or thinner application can produce light airy tones or areas which graduate from dark to light, 'Kudloopudlooalook' by Oonark, Ruby Angrna'naaq. Another method of handling is to spatter the colour onto the print surface by flicking the loaded bristles of the brush with the finger, 'Dream' by Kukiiyaut, Aningrniq. Often special colour effects are obtained by printing one colour with the brush and then spattering another colour over it as in 'Dream'. And of course, as in any print media, the desired effect must be repeated exactly for each print in the edition. This process has the distinct advantage that very little in the way of equipment is really needed, an important factor in the North where shipping is expensive and erratic.

The stone-cut process is slightly more involved, technically, but is still one of the most direct and simple of the various hand-printing processes. Large flat slabs of stone are of course indispensable. Since printmaking had been briefly attempted in Baker Lake prior to our arrival in 1969, several slabs of stone for printmaking were already in place in the craft shop. No local stone deposits suitable for quarrying in the form of the necessary large slabs existed in the Baker Lake area. The stone we worked on had been quarried in southern Quebec and shipped to Baker by sea. These stone slabs vary in size but are approximately 24"x36" and about 5" thick. The face is filed and sanded down to a level surface. It is soft enough to be cut with a penknife or paring knife. As with the stencil process, tracing the drawing is the first step in making the stone cut. Generally the surface is first painted white to make the tracing more visible and to make the emerging image clearer as the cutting proceeds. All areas which do not appear in the drawing are cut away, the lines and shapes to be printed remaining level with the face of the slab. Some areas may be treated with a scratched surface line to create a textural effect, such as the fur texture in 'Wolf Man', 1971, by William Noah, Oosuaq and Martha Noah. The ink is the same as is used in the stencil prints; it is mixed on a glass palette and rolled onto the cut surface of the stone with a rubber brayer. A sheet of paper is placed on the inked surface of the block and the back of the paper is rubbed until the inked design transfers to the paper. The Baker Lake printers have made their own tools from caribou antler to use in applying the rubbed pressure necessary to transfer the inked image to the paper. Some examples of stone-cut line are 'Celebration' by H. Kigusiuq, Iksiraq and 'The

Pleasures of Eating Fish' by Tookoome. Additional colours may be added by cutting separate stones for each colour and printing successively one colour over the next. When the edition is completed, the surface of the stone slab is filed and sanded by hand to clear the surface for use in making another print. So each block is used to make many prints until it becomes too thin to be sanded down.

One of the immediate needs was for more drawings. The old sketch books stored in the loft of the shop served to get the project started but we needed new sources if the production of the prints was to grow. We handed out drawing paper and pencils to anyone, any age, who wanted to try and we promised to buy all drawings that came back as a result of our talent hunt. The results were absolutely incredible. And for most of these people these were the first drawings they had ever made in their lives. Some of the artists discovered in those first few weeks were Anguhadluq, Annaqtuusi, Iisa, Ittuluka'naaq, Janet Kigusiuq, William Noah, Mamnguqsualuk, and Qarliksaq. This is not to say that everyone in Baker Lake who took pencil in hand immediately made beautiful images. We did make aesthetic quality judgements and the people did accept our decisions without rancour since drawing was a 'white' idea anyway. Our decisions were made by virtue of the pay scale. We paid more money for those drawings which showed promise and very little for poorer efforts. Everyone in the shop enjoyed seeing the drawings come in and we had gala occasions inspecting and discussing the new efforts. The story content in particular was of great interest to everyone in the shop and I am sure that some of the young 'hip' teen-agers heard the traditional legends for the first time while looking at drawings in the craft shop.

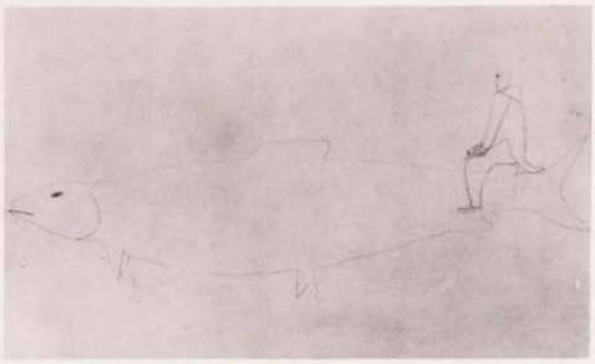
'Crane', the first Baker Lake stencil print by Iksiktaaryuk/Mannik.

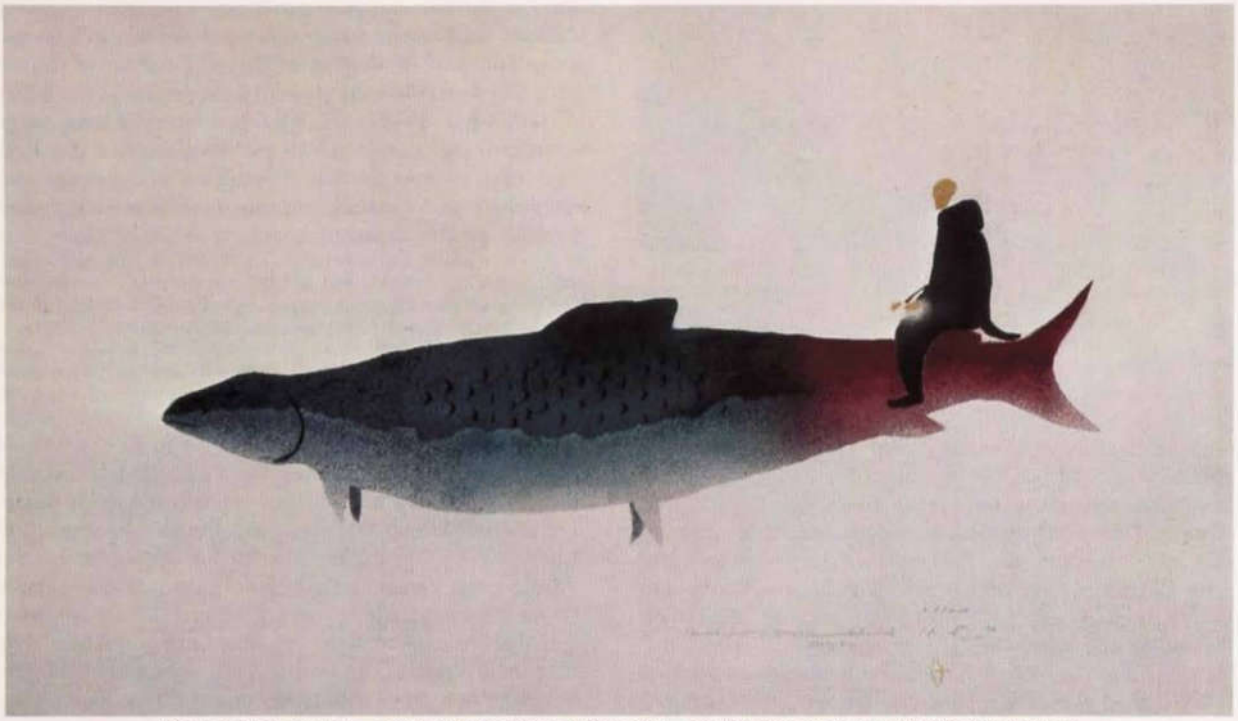
In short order printmaking became a spectator sport second only in popularity to the Friday night movies. The transition from spectator to participant was also swift and painless. We offered $2.00 per hour for trainees to work while learning for one week. Afterwards they would be paid by the job. Some of the first trainees were Thomas Manik, Martha Noah, William Kannak, Francis Kaluraq, Michael Amarook, Vital Makpaaq, Alexis Pameok, Barnabas Oosuaq. The Baker Lake print shop has had a fluid organization from the first. Of the first printers, some have since left for other jobs, some have worked as printers for as long as they could stand the lack of freedom involved in wage employment, and then have returned when the responsibilities and the indoor environment could again be tolerated. Others have worked continuously with the project from the beginning.

Michael Amarook and William Kannak were the only printers to have had previous experience with printmaking. Michael's introduction to the 1971 Baker Lake print catalogue states: 'In 1964 the people picked Akkanarshoonark and me to go to Winnipeg for the first exhibition of Baker Lake carvings. A year later I started on printmaking for the first time. We ran out of paper and there was no one to help us so we never printed again until 1969.' The drawings we were using for our first prints had been made in connection with earlier government projects designed to add prints to the sculpture output of Baker Lake. There were few to work with and they were mostly on rather poor quality paper in large sketch books. We found drawings by Jessie Oonark, Luke Iksiktaaryuk, Victoria Mamnguqsualuk and Hannah Kigusiuq.

The rationale for the making of multiples was a difficult concept to put across. It had a kind of magic of its own but was exceedingly tedious to the visually sensitive printers who, although they did not think of themselves as artists, were all capable of and willing to make variations and elaborations of the image they were printing. No one had ever considered attempting to reproduce a carving exactly, and why pictures should be different was difficult to explain to a group of people totally innocent of knowledge regarding the history of printmaking in the western world. They more or less accepted on faith the idea that once a successful image had been created, then it must be repeated. Right from the beginning, however, we did not present printing as an operation limited to an exact reproduction of a drawing. The printing was a creative process in its own right, and we worked together, making many proofs, changing colours or strength of line, leaving out parts of drawings in some cases, adding spattered stencil effects, until the strongest image could be agreed upon. For this reason the final prints are signed by both artist and printer. In many cases the drawing itself was the merest suggestion of a contour line. One that comes to mind in particular from the first collection of Baker prints is

'Keeveeok's Journey' by Mamnguqsualuk and Ruby Angrna'naaq. In my notebook which I kept at that time I find a little notation at the bottom of the page for 12 September 1969: 'pick one for Ruby where she can use her watermark idea'. Ruby had spilled coffee on a piece of print paper which was thrown in the garbage. Later she mentioned to me how beautifully the edge of the coffee stain had dried, making a shape with a slightly darker sinuously curved edge. I suggested right away that this effect could be used to advantage in a print and 'Keeveeok's Journey' was the result of our joint experimentations, beginning with a drawing which was only a





'Keeveeok's Journey' – a print inspired by a coffee stain – by Mamnguqsualuk and Ruby Angrna'naaq. At the top of the page is the original drawing of the design.

delicate pencil outline. In many cases colour was added to black and white drawings. At the beginning this was done either in exclusively stencil prints as in 'Scraping Caribou Skin' by Arngnatqik, Taviniq, or in stone-cut prints where colours were added by additional overprinting with stencils as in 'Day Spirit' by Oonark, Makpaaq, Amarook. The problems of registration involved in overprinting two or more stone cuts was more difficult and was not used until 1971 in 'On the Land' by Anguhadluq, Mannik.

We had been asked to submit a report on our progress to the industrial department in Churchill, less than three weeks after our arrival and we dutifully reported to the area administrator on 18 July 1969:

> The printmaking project is off to a good beginning. There are five people working on stone cuts. The first editions of good prints are in progress. Sheila has introduced stencil prints and six people are working on them. There are eight different stencils in progress and several look salable to me. C.A.P.'s [Canadian Arctic Producers] procedures for prints and Cape Dorset's analysis of labour costs and local sales policies would be a great help to me in planning the break-down of labour costs to produce prints here. I would appreciate any effort to rush our order for stencil paper as the stencil print project will soon come to a stand-still without it . . . As yet our trunk and the coffee maker for the shop have not arrived.

By the end of the second week in August our trunk still had not arrived, but after the results of our talent search for drawings, we had definitely decided that our dreams of moving to Vancouver were a thing of the past. We had had little communication from the Churchill

JACK BUTLER

Michael Amarook, director in charge of Baker Lake printing program during the first three printmaking years.

office, but we had been offered a contract to stay for seven more months. We agreed, although with some trepidation since we had as yet received no money, neither travelling allowance nor salary and we were literally almost down to our last nickel. Another dilemma was that we had several loose ends in the south. Our car was on temporary loan to a friend in Pittsburgh, we had shipped a few things to a friend in Vancouver and had some other things stored in a friend's basement awaiting shipment to Vancouver. Most of the things, including the car, could not be re-routed to the Arctic. We felt that we had to return to Winnipeg for a week to clear up all these loose ends before we could organize ourselves for a seven-month stay in Baker.

Two other problems, new to us then, were to continue as the major worries for months to come. We were almost out of crucial supplies at the shop: stencil paper, printing paper and ink. There had only been odds and ends to start with anyway. Repeated telexes on this subject to Churchill had gone unanswered. The other area of concern was that we did not have a reliable budget for the project – weekly, monthly or yearly. We had been told to get the printmaking underway and to spend what was needed. We enquired in the settlement about usual rates of pay, hired people to begin work, paid them until funds were gone and then waited for money, sometimes tiding the project over with cash from our own pockets. We had no way of determining how many people we could hire, how much we could realistically expect to spend on materials or how to divide the expenses between carving and printmaking.

The lack of a continuing reliable source of funds and the lack of response to our requisitions for supplies were two major sources of frustration and concern during our three years at Baker Lake. They were followed closely by a third: the difficulty of lack of communication with the South. Mail was often slow due to bad flying weather. Reception over radiophone was very poor and often radio communication would be completely out for days at a time. With government telex we were only permitted to communicate with the next link in the chain of command and whether our messages were acted upon or passed on or even read was something we had no way of knowing. We could do very little to communicate with sources of supply, the marketing agency for the art our shop was producing, or with the gallery dealers who were engaged in selling the prints and sculpture. But, in August, 1969, only the tip of the iceberg was revealed with regard to these problems and we thought that a week in Winnipeg would enable us to straighten out our affairs in the South and at the same time discuss some of these issues person-to-person with the people in Churchill. We sent a telex on 16 August 1969 to the Regional Administrator at Churchill.

My cheque for July has not arrived – remember – please make reservations Transair to Winnipeg and Churchill Hotel for two adults, one child, out August 22, 23, return August 31, Sept. 1 – short of cash for trip – can Transair bill me, pay later – also want to buy supplies for Craft Shop maximum $500. – please advise on how this is done.

K. J. Butler

By August 22 we had received no money, no trunk and no answer to our telexes. We did not have enough to pay our fare to Churchill but we decided to go out to the airstrip, get on the plane and try to talk about it in Churchill. The buying and checking of airline tickets was a little more casual in Baker Lake than it is in the South so we were indeed able to fly to Churchill with no ticket and then to explain to a very disgruntled Transair clerk that we just had to run over to the government office for a minute before we could pay for our flight. I would not like to try repeating this little scenario in Toronto or Vancouver, but fortunately for us it worked in Churchill. At the government office our next-in-line superior was out of town and the man behind the desk gave us the 'I just work here' routine. Rising to his full, menacing, 115-pound bulk, Jack suggested that someone better damn well find us a pay cheque somewhere or all three of us would move into the office since we had no money for a hotel. A little menace seemed to go a long way and a few secretarial scurryings produced a cheque for our long-overdue travel allowance and a month's pay.

Returning to the airport we paid for our flight and inquired about our trunk. It was suggested that we could look around for it in the hangar if we wanted to. We soon found the much-desired trunk stashed in a corner where it had obviously been for a good while and arranged to have it put on the next plane to Baker. We proceeded the next day to Winnipeg where we duly

burned our bridges behind us and returned to the Arctic at the end of the week. On September 3 we submitted another monthly report:

The printmaking project is continuing to grow. There is a core group of printers and cutters for stone and stencil prints who are rapidly developing technical skill. Over three dozen experimental prints have been tried and ten signed, complete editions are ready for presentation to the C.E.A.C. . . . The 'talent hunt' described in July's report has produced many potentially good draughtsmen and eight very talented artists whose drawings we are now using for prints. When adequate and permanent drawing materials have arrived, these people may produce drawings that are salable.

Shortly after our return from Winnipeg a very happy event occurred which gave real impetus to the burgeoning printmaking project. The Industrial Department in Churchill suggested that it would be possible to raise funds to send one of the Eskimo printmakers from Cape Dorset to Baker Lake for a visit if we were interested. We were very enthusiastic and so, early in September, Iyola arrived in Baker Lake. The Baker Lake printers were impressed with his self-assurance and although there was some problem in communication due to the two different Eskimo dialects, it seemed to work out well enough. We wrote to the Regional Industrial Superintendent at Churchill on 17 September 1969.

We would like to express our appreciation to the C.E.A.C. and the West Baffin Co-op for sending Iyola to Baker Lake. His stay here served as a catalyst for our new printmaking program. His demonstrations held the interest of the whole shop for a week. He was very helpful technically, knowing how to turn the available files and knives into first-class printmaking tools. But more important, he was a rich source of information about the whole West Baffin print experience. It was a great pleasure for all of us to work with him.

K. J. Butler
Craft Officer
Michael Amarook
Director, Printmaking

'Woman' by artist Oonark and printer Mannik. A very heavy application of ink was used to achieve the areas of flat strong colour.

And later that same month we reported:

On September 19, a selection of completed stencil prints and stonecuts was sent to the C.E.A.C. to be reviewed.

On November 3 and 4, 1969, the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council met in Yellowknife. One of the items on their agenda was the viewing of the first small group of Baker Lake prints. It had not been customary in the past for craft officers to attend meetings of the Council. The Regional Industrial Supervisor attended and relayed Council's comments but since he was not an artist, and knew nothing about printmaking, this arrangement seemed less than satisfactory. Jack requested permission to attend the meeting to discuss the prints in person and his request was granted. He was the first craft officer to take a collection of prints to a meeting of the Council. A vote of confidence by the Council would indicate that the prints were of sufficient quality to begin marketing. The minutes of the Council's November meeting record:

The Council examined 31 Baker Lake prints, presented by Mr. Jack Butler. These prints had been produced in the past 3½ months under Mr. Butler's guidance. The Council was very impressed with the results which he had achieved, and felt that the quality was sufficient to warrant a special exhibition of Baker Lake prints in the Spring, 1970. After some discussion as to the appropriate Centre for such an exhibition, it was agreed that Mrs Alma Houston should explore the possibilities of an exhibition at the Edmonton Art Gallery, in April, 1970.

Mr Poliquin suggested that Mr Butler might give consideration to better placing of the designs within the framework of the sheet. Other than this, the Council found the technical aspects of the prints most encouraging.

The vote of confidence by the Council was important and put us in a better position to discuss continuing employment in Baker Lake. As early as September 30 we had written to Churchill:

Our two principal responsibilities at Baker Lake are to insure the growth of a producing Art and Crafts Centre and to develop Eskimo leadership capable of assuming the management burden of the centre as soon as possible. These two functions are inseparable if art and crafts production is to become financially and socially successful here.

The Crafts Shop may not have been ready for Eskimo direction in the past, but in our opinion Eskimo leadership must take first priority now. We recommend the establishment of a new position, 'Director of Art and Crafts', to be held only by an

Eskimo resident of Baker Lake. His responsibility should be the complete operation of the Craft Centre and all its functions. He should be given assistance in quality control by government appointed special projects officers, technical assistants, etc. This puts the responsibility on Eskimo shoulders where it belongs and opens the way for an art and crafts producing organization independent of government support.

We recommend John Naryagek for this position. He is at present under contract to assist in the operation of the centre. His duties are to keep records, to pack shipments of finished work, to arrange for display of work and inventory, and to supervise and maintain the shop when called upon to do so. He has performed all of the above in varying degrees for the last seven years. He has often been called upon to direct the whole operation including the appraisal of sculpture and artifacts and has done considerable interpreting and translation as well.

In the same line of thought we have invented an unofficial position, Director of Printmaking. The print program is technically complex and requires continuous supervision. Michael Amarook is holding this position. He was one of the first people to try printmaking here in 1965 and is an experienced stone cutter and printer. He has demonstrated considerable initiative and to the full extent of his present knowledge and experience has made contributions at the organizational level. He has also redesigned the printing and cutting rooms to better serve our needs. At present his salary is paid from the purchase budget, but a separate contract and salary would be preferable.

For both men, official recognition would give them a secure position from which to gain the additional knowledge and education necessary for the independent management of the Baker Lake Crafts program.

Even in the short time we had been in Baker, we could see that the people with whom we were working were sincerely grateful for an alternative to the welfare office. But since the crafts program was for most adults the only alternative to welfare, we wondered to what extent people were trying to be artists simply because there was no alternative. At any rate, we believed that they had to have a real stake in the project before they could reasonably decide whether or not art was the right alternative. They had to take on some of the real worries and responsibilities of management. John Naryagek* and Michael Amarook no longer work with the crafts program in Baker but for the first three printmaking years, they were the managerial backbone of the organization and fundamental movers in the eventual establishment of the Sanavik Co-operative Association which now manages the printmaking-sculpture production in Baker Lake. So as the new year, 1970, began, we optimistically felt that the worst hurdles had been cleared. The idea of eventual Eskimo management had been initiated with formal contracts for Michael and John, we had contracts to continue in Baker, the Council had been very happy with the prints, and an official opening was definitely set for April. It only remained to complete the printing of the editions in time to ship the prints out of Baker by the beginning of March at the latest.

Money had been a nagging problem all along with sometimes more, sometimes less money to work with and always the promise that soon a permanent revolving account would be set up for the project with fixed monthly amount for expenditure that could be counted on. Then in January (near the close of the fiscal year when federal funds were low) we were told by telex that we should cease to write cheques. This, at the eleventh hour was hard to take, especially since we had lost printing time in November and December while waiting for the rice paper to come. It was a hard blow to the morale of printers and artists who had been responding to our appeals to take their own project into their own hands. The artistic worth of the prints and their value in the southern market had not yet been demonstrated to the printers and artists. Withdrawal of funds to them seemed to indicate the unworthiness of the work they were producing. After the initial moments of disbelief we immediately set to work sending imploring letters, telegrams, telexes to Churchill, to the marketing agency, to the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, to our mothers and to anyone we could think of who might be sympathetic. We met that week's payday out of our own pockets while we waited for some kind of response from someone. After a few more weeks of sweating it out in the arctic silence the response did come in the form of an ever smaller, but at least renewed budget. The first collection of prints was finished in time and the opening was a great success. Jack attended with two of the printers, Barnabas Oosuaq and William Kannak. Returning, he wrote to Alma Houston at C.A.P. in April 1970:

The Edmonton trip was a great success for Oosuaq, Kannak and for me. The printmakers were well received everywhere. . . . The official opening was well attended, and as you know, the Edmonton Art Gallery bought the entire first collection and virtually sold out a second collection . . . So the trip really did go well and the men did return with a very favourable impression and this was badly needed to help the printmakers to believe in the usefulness of their work.

With the successful presentation of a year's work in the form of the 1970 collection of Baker Lake prints, the experience had come full circle. An excerpt from a letter we wrote to an old friend at that time is a good indication of how we felt:

At first there was so much unfamiliar in the whole experience of living here. We were forced to remain open to anything that came along and there were half a dozen new things a minute. Bringing our organizational powers to bear on the machinery of the Craft Shop and trying to sensitively administrate a large-scale production without violating what we know of Eskimo psyche, also teaching (always the subtlest of games – permitting learning to happen in those who want it to happen) and just plain living in such a severe and isolated scene were totally occupying. Now the major structure of the Craft Shop is organized and functioning – it takes continual attention to implement new discoveries and it takes great care not to over-organize and thus impose, or more accurately, close out an Eskimo-generated organization and style – now the shoe is on the other foot and the Eskimos can serve as the best teachers. ◆

*John Naryagek was voted back to the board of directors of the Sanavik Co-operative Association in 1976.

COBWEBS

The Artistry of the Spider, Captured in the Misty Light of Early Morning by the Sensitive Eye and Camera of

SILVIJA ULMANIS

Ms Ulmanis, a graduate in botany (McGill), majored in photography at the Collège du Vieux Montréal and is now museum interpreter, National Museum of Natural Sciences in Ottawa.

Bluebird nest and eggs.

LORNE SCOTT

The fledglings at ten days.

FRED LAHRMAN

The mountain bluebird with food for his hungry family.

FRED LAHRMAN

BRING BACK THE BLUEBIRDS

BY LORNE SCOTT

SINCE THE TIME of early settlers the bluebird has been considered the true harbinger of spring. Pioneers tell of southern prairie hillsides being blue with bluebirds during the peak migration in early April. Unfortunately, such a sight will probably never be witnessed again on the prairies. Indeed, many residents today claim that they have never seen a bluebird.

There are three species of bluebirds found in North America. The one most often seen on the prairies is the azure-coloured mountain bluebird *(Sialia currucoides)*. Its range extends from eastern Manitoba, west to the Pacific Coast, south to the Gulf of Mexico and north into the Yukon. The eastern bluebird *(Sialia sialis)* with its characteristic rusty breast is found in the eastern parts of North America, westward into Saskatchewan where a few pairs sometimes nest. In southern British Columbia the western bluebird *(Sialia mexicana)* with its chestnut-coloured sides and back, is found at the northern limit of its range which extends down through the Rocky Mountains to Mexico.

What has happened to these beautiful and beneficial members of the thrush family? There appear to be several reasons for their disappearance. With settlement, the land was cleared for farming and over the years trees containing abandoned woodpecker holes and natural cavities were gradually destroyed. Consequently each spring fewer and fewer nesting sites were available for the returning birds.

This problem of nesting sites was compounded by the arrival of the starling and house sparrow from Europe in the mid-1800s. The introduced birds were released along the eastern seaboard; they thrived in a new land with few natural enemies, and within a few decades they had extended their range west to the Pacific Ocean. Unfortunately tree cavities and woodpecker holes were preferred nesting sites for the more aggressive introduced species. These took over the few remaining natural nesting sites from the bluebirds and other native hole-nesting birds.

In desperation, bluebirds have been nesting under the eaves and in holes in buildings, in mail boxes and machinery. Fence posts and utility poles with cavities and holes also provided nesting sites. But more recently, farmers are using metal and long-lasting pressure-treated wooden fence posts. The older utility poles are being replaced by new durable ones and underground cables.

These observations seem to point to the lack of nesting sites as one main reason for the dwindling numbers of bluebirds, and indeed to their total disappearance in some areas. As naturalists and conser-

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An executive of the Regina and Saskatchewan Natural History Societies, Lorne Scott farms at Indian Head, Saskatchewan.

vationists became aware of the decreasing number of bluebirds, they sought ways to prevent further depletion of the species. By far the most successful program undertaken to bring back the bluebirds has been the construction of wooden nesting boxes. The birds have readily accepted these man-made homes.

The ideal nest box for bluebirds has a floor five inches square, walls eight inches high, with a one and one-half inch diameter entrance hole about six inches above the floor. An entrance hole of this size allows the bluebirds to enter but prevents the larger starling from gaining access to the nest. Plywood is used to make many houses; it is easy to work with and weathers well. Most of the houses on bluebird trails are not painted, but despite the rain, snow, wind and sun they stand up well. Some have been in use for over a decade.

The bluebird houses are set out in early spring, before the first migrants begin to arrive. From two to five houses are erected each mile, and it is from this practice of setting out nest boxes along mile after mile of roadside that the term 'bluebird trail' originates. Some trails run for only a couple of miles; others stretch for hundreds of miles and consist of thousands of houses.

The longest bluebird trail is located between MacGregor, Manitoba (about 75 miles west of Winnipeg) and Regina, Saskatchewan. It stretches north to North Battleford and south to the Saskatchewan border. Hundreds of miles of trails branch out from the main line of nest boxes.

The houses are fastened about four to five feet above the ground on fence posts beside the road. For best results they are placed in clearings at least 75 yards from the nearest trees; this helps to discourage house sparrows and house wrens from taking up residence. Some bluebird trails are set up along quiet side roads; others run along busy highways, including portions of the Trans-Canada Highway.

With the nest boxes in place the return of the first bluebirds in spring is anxiously awaited. Sometimes a premature arrival finds them caught in a late winter snow-storm, with temperatures well below freezing. There have been times when large numbers of bluebirds have frozen or starved to death during severe weather conditions. But they are hardy birds and are generally able to cope with most adverse early spring weather.

Within a few weeks after their arrival the bluebirds pair off and select a nesting site. The cup-shaped nests are built of dry grass, thin strips of dry bark and other soft plant material within the bird house. The female lays one egg each day until her clutch of eggs, usually numbering five or six, is completed. Then starts the incubation period of from 12 to 14 days. During this time the female remains on the eggs all night and most of the day, leaving briefly only to feed.

When the eggs hatch, the parents are faced with the task of feeding their blind, naked and helpless young from dawn to dusk. The fledglings grow rapidly, doubling their body weight two or three times during the first week of life. At ten days of age their bodies are nearly completely feathered and at 18 days they are able to fly.

GARY SEIB

Lorne Scott examines one of his 2,000 bird houses. His bluebird trails extend for some 600 miles in southeastern Saskatchewan.

The parents continue to feed their young for a short time after they leave the nest; but soon they are on their own, for many pairs of adults are busy preparing another nest in which a second brood of young will be raised.

When the busy nesting season is over, the old nests are removed and the houses are checked and repaired in readiness for the return of the birds next spring. Vandalism is a problem in some areas. Houses are used for target practice, smashed and stolen. In some cases the tops are torn off, exposing the young birds to chilling rains and the scorching sun.

What does the future hold for the bluebird? Several years ago many people thought the bluebird was doomed to extinction. Others, more optimistic, began setting out nest boxes and today hundreds of houses are set out each year across the continent by scout troops, school classes, natural history organizations, and interested groups and individuals. The results are encouraging. Bird watchers now report bluebirds in areas where they have not been seen for years; others are seeing bluebirds for the first time.

Those who have provided nesting boxes for bluebirds have derived many hours of pleasure from their efforts. They also have the satisfaction of knowing that they are helping to bring the bluebirds back to the prairies. This in itself is incentive enough to continue the maintenance and expansion of the bluebird trails. ◆

The hundreds of stones needed to build a winter house are shown in this painting of Dr John Rae's landing at Repulse Bay, 1846. Painting by Charles F. Comfort.

Dr Barratt is Associate Professor of Russian at Carleton University, Ottawa.

RAE'S FORT HOPE

By Glynn Barratt

DR JOHN RAE (1813-93) was in some respects the most distinguished of the Company's explorers of the Eastern Arctic in the nineteenth century. Certainly, he was its most accomplished traveller: untiring walker, indefatigable snow-shoer, competent boatman, marksman and winter camper. Rae was, as Vilhjalmur Stefansson remarks with unaccustomed warmth of admiration, 'a man exact and truthful, and in his methods of travel a generation ahead of his time.'

Even on the first of his four arctic journeys, that of 1846-47, Rae gave striking evidence of his resourceful and – in Franklin's day – original approach towards the problems of both travelling and living in the North. That journey, like the later ones in search of evidence of Franklin's death, was, as Professor J. M. Wordie noted in his introduction to *Rae's Arctic Correspondence, 1844-55,* Volume XVI of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, remarkable both for its speed and for Rae's virtual dependence on his fishing nets and rifle for fresh food. His methods of 'living off the land' brought him success, yet were 'in contrast with the experience of many travellers unaccustomed to them and often not prepared to learn.' In his technique, Rae was a modern; in his willingness always and fully to exploit skills previously used in northern latitudes by servants of the Company, a pioneer of arctic common sense.

Yet, in his deeply pragmatic dealings with the Arctic, Rae always preserved the power to take the calculated risk. How otherwise, given his limited resources and such risks as were inherent in his modestly financed first great expedition, could he even have expected to complete the task devised by Thomas Simpson, modified after his death in 1840, and entrusted to John Rae by the Directors of the Company in 1844? The task was a daunting one: 'to travel in boats from Churchill along the west coast of Hudson's Bay to Repulse Bay or Fury and Hecla Strait . . . then to examine the coastline of that strait to Castor and Pollux River, or if Boothia proved to be part of the mainland, to some point already reached by the officers of the Victory expedition.' So it was that, in mid-August, 1846, his given task not yet completed, Rae resolved to winter in the Arctic, on the sullen shores of Repulse Bay.

It was, for all his later efforts to make light of the great hazards it entailed – in his report to Sir George Simpson of August 1847, for example – an extremely bold decision. For, as he would concede in his *Narrative of Expedition to the Shores of the Arctic Sea in 1846-1847,* his little band of thirteen had been 'differently situated from any party that had hitherto gone to those cold and barren regions. The resources of the country were quite unknown to us; it was not likely that the deer would remain near at hand all winter'. Starvation, in a word, could have detained them at their winter camp forever.

Rae proved himself in the event not merely equal to the situation but in full command of it. Supplied with deer, salmon and trout, geese, eider duck and ptarmigan, the group wintered happily and safely, if not altogether comfortably, in a stone house built on sloping ground 500 feet from the east shore of the North Pole River, on the rim of what is now known as Rae Isthmus. The small house, 'dignified with the name of Fort Hope' as Rae lightly put it, stood in latitude 66° 32' 16" N. 'With the resourcefulness of a true pioneer' wrote L. J. Burpee in his account of *Western Exploration, 1840-1867,* 'Rae built a house of stone and earth and, failing driftwood, gathered quantities of the withered stems of a small plant *[Andromeda tetragona]* that grew on the rocks to use as fuel . . . Altogether, Rae and his party spent a fairly comfortable winter in a locality and under conditions which would probably have driven the majority of Arctic explorers to despair.' In due course he finished his survey of the coastline of Committee Bay, disproved the insularity of Boothia (though not, as he would find, to the full satisfaction of the Admiralty) and at length brought his men safely back to Churchill. Close on seven hundred miles of unmapped land and coastline had been traced. Not one man died or became seriously ill. But more than this: Rae and his party 'were the first white men who maintained themselves in the Arctic regions *by their own unaided efforts.*' Rae had taken stores to last four months into the Arctic, and had stayed there for fourteen.

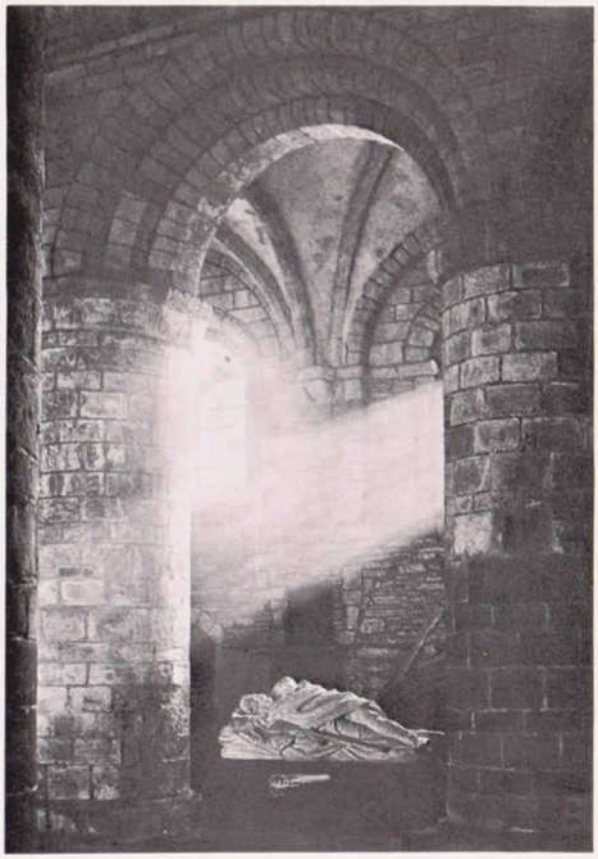
'The long history of Arctic exploration' claims a recent writer 'is largely explained by the inability of the adventurers adequately to adapt to Arctic conditions . . . Not until Stefansson did "civilization" become "savage" enough intelligently to adapt to the demands of the North.' Few would argue with this as a generalization; yet, because the statement is so sweeping, it is false. For Stefansson had his precursors – men willing and able to adapt to the demands of the Far North; and of these men, as Stefansson himself knew and acknowledged openly, Rae was the most accomplished and the most successful in his work.

Outside a narrow scientific sphere, Rae's achievements were destined to remain unrecognized it seemed,

for decades. Unsung during his lifetime and, indeed, viewed with disfavour in high naval quarters (had the man not claimed that Franklin's followers had very possibly, in their despair, resorted to cannibalism?), John Rae posthumously slipped into that deep obscurity reserved for the civilian employees of the Company who had done service far from London. Yet a man who led four arctic expeditions and who personally traced seventeen hundred miles of uncharted coastline, and was rated by no less an authority than Stefansson as a greater explorer than Franklin, deserves well of his country, and should be remembered among its heroes. Recently, due recognition has been given to Rae's stature as an arctic traveller – by British scholars. His journals are now being edited in Cambridge, where, thanks to Professor E. E. Rich's fine edition of *Rae's Arctic Correspondence, 1844-55*, awareness of John Rae's achievement has been increasing steadily. But in Canada the silence on the subject of John Rae is oppressive.

How is Rae to be remembered by Canadians? Fort Rae, northwest of Yellowknife, was named for him, but one can hardly hope to understand Rae better, or to learn about the man, by going there. As to his personal possessions, Rae himself suggested that his medals, the Franklin relics and his Eskimo implements and curiosities should ultimately go to Edinburgh University. In 1926 they were deposited in the Royal Scottish Museum. He did not die in North America: there is no grave to tend in Canada, nor had he children to collect his arctic papers, private letters, and equipment.

Rae's memorial in the St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, depicts the explorer wrapped in a buffalo robe, with his gun beside him.



Yet Canadians do not have reason for complaint. Sixty miles north of Southampton Island and some sixteen hundred miles north of Toronto, by the shallow but, in summertime, turbulent North Pole River, stands the most solid, most tangible, most eloquent of all memorials to Rae the arctic traveller. Fort Hope contains no marble figure like that now in St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, in the Orkney Isles – a chiselled man 'lying asleep wrapped in a buffalo sleeping bag', moccasins on, stone gun by unmoving hand. But Fort Hope was built by Rae and by his men; and until very recently, its walls still stood some six feet high to the left of its narrow doorway.

It was early on the morning of the 18th day of August, 1846, after a wet and stormy day and night, that Rae and his small band – four of them fellow-Orkneymen: John Corrigal, George Flett, John Folster, Edward Hutchison – set about gathering the stones to build a house. Or, more precisely, the four men started gathering the necessary stones, while Rae himself aided the others in the setting of hemp nets to catch fresh fish and in the stalking of the deer then moving southwest through the Melville Peninsula. Rae subsequently summarized the group's activity for that day and for the next two weeks in the fourth chapter of his *Narrative:*

> All hands were now busily employed making preparations for a long and dreary winter; for this purpose, four men were set to work to collect stones for building a house . . . Our work was much impeded by rainy weather, particularly the house building, as the clay or mud was washed away as soon as applied.

The chosen site had three immediate advantages. It was near water – the fast-flowing and, in August, foaming North Pole River – and so, near potential stores of fish. It was in an area where, thanks to age-long weathering of bedrock outcrops, stones of a size suitable for building a small house of the Orcadian, fell-dyke variety were generously strewn about. Lastly, boulders gathered locally could easily enough be bound together with a clay taken from the estuary where it had a fairly high lime content from marine shells.

Simply to land at Repulse Bay (as is so clear from Charles F. Comfort's painting of John Rae and his associates so doing, from their little boats the *Magnet* and *North Pole*) is to see hundreds of well-weathered blocks of sedimentary rock. But to walk inland to Fort Hope is to appreciate Rae's mental calculations: for the nearby river-mouth marked the beginning of the route across Rae Isthmus and hence the furthest point to which stores could easily be carried. Rough grasses of the tundra type grew here and there on the shallow soil, and half-buried in it lay stones that needed only a few

blows from a wide chisel to be ready for the mason. Suitable building material, in short, lay close at hand. (And, one need hardly add, Rae's men would have had neither time nor energy to spare to carry boulders any distance; gathering *Andromeda* in quantities sufficient to give fuel for many weeks was work enough.) Water, rocks, and clay: John Rae's Orcadians needed no more to start their walls.

The men built rapidly, once the materials were on the spot. Who were the master masons? One can only speculate, though there are several indications that John Corrigal, chief builder of Rae's oven at Fort Hope, and Flett, who had lived thirty years in the Orkneys, both came to the forefront at this time in late August. It is plain that Rae had had the building of a house, or at least the probability of wintering in one, in mind on leaving Churchill on July 5th.

So, too, had Sir George Simpson, the Governor, as is apparent from John Rae's instructions: 'In the event of your wintering within the Arctic Circle, you will be careful to notice any characteristic features or influences of the long night of the high latitudes . . . In the event of your wintering in the country, you will cultivate the most friendly relations with the natives.' Among other things, Rae had requested and been given 'four small windows, each of two double panes of glass.' It is improbable that he had snow-houses in mind, one window to each one of four small structures, or a pair in each of two. He had had, during his first twelve years in North America, only extremely limited experience of snow-houses. Fell-dyke, loose stone structures, on the other hand, were familiar to him, as to all Orkneymen – around Stromness; they could be found in dozens in his childhood years. It is not difficult to believe that Rae had always had a small, stone house in mind – small, to contain loss of vital heat; stone for convenience.

One other factor, too, led Rae to favour the construction of a house no more than 7½ feet high, no more than 14 feet across: the question of a roof with strength to sustain the weight of heavy snow late in the winter. Beside the North Pole River there was not one piece of lumber to be had; and what was in the party's boats, *North Pole* and *Magnet*, was some distance off, on North Pole Lake. Still the boats' spars could, if necessary, be carried to Fort Hope. Rae gave the order, and the oars and masts were duly brought. The oars were eight or nine feet long; the masts, ten or eleven, as was proper in boats twenty-two feet long but meant for open waters. Even if well bound together, to give greater length and strength, such oars and masts would not support a roof more than, say, 15 feet across on the inside. But, of course, smallness was no failing – given room enough to move and sleep – when temperatures would shortly dip so low and human warmth would be at a premium. Here is Rae on the construction of Fort Hope, first, in his subsequent report (10 August 1847) to the Governor, then in his published *Narrative:*

According to one of John Rae's nieces, this portrait 'shows his habitual merry twinkle'.

All hands except our deer hunters Nibitabo and Ouligbuck were set to work to collect stones for building a house, which was finished on the 2nd September and named Fort Hope. Its internal dimensions were 20 feet by 14, height in front 7½ feet sloping to 5½ feet at the back. As much moss as possible and a plant resembling heather were collected for fuel. . . The temperature of my *room* (a small space separated from the rest of the house by a piece of oil cloth) was frequently 12 or 14 below zero; the men's quarters were rather less cold. Our fire whilst cooking, as far as heating the house was concerned, was worse than useless, as the chimney, not being built on the most approved principles, would not permit any smoke to pass through it unless the door was open. Our trifling discomforts were the subject of many a joke, and with one or two exceptions only added to the hilarity of the party: thus a poor fellow who got his knee frozen (not dangerously) whilst in bed, was rallied on the subject for some time afterwards.

We formed a very good roof by using the oars and masts of our boats as rafters, and covering them with oilcloth and moose skin, the latter being fixed to the lower or inside of the rafters, whilst the former was placed on the outside to run off the rain. The door was made of parchment deer-skins stretched over a frame of wood. The walls were fully two feet thick, with three small openings, in which a like number of windows, each having two panes of glass, were placed. Our establishment was dignified with the name of Fort Hope, and was situated in 66° 32' 16" N.

So began the winter of 1846-47. In his 'room', Rae placed some of the party's stores of pemmican and flour; by the chimney, in the larger area, the men had a small sheet-iron stove and a set of sheet-iron lamps 'for burning oil after the Esquimaux fashion, and some small

kettles (commonly called conjurors)'. Quickly enough, it had grown clear to the whole party that the place would be uncomfortable to live in for so long as bitterly cold weather failed to exorcise from its thick walls that fearful dampness that, in mid-September, made the memory of recent tent life seem pleasant. Inside the house, moreover, the three windows gave but little light even when the sun was above the horizon, and seal oil provided the only artificial illumination. There was not enough fuel to heat the building; it was both dark and cold inside. The most serious fault of the house, however, lay in its position with regard to snow-drifts. As early as October, the house was nearly buried by snow.

Rae had in mind to organize a school while in this house, but quickly found that the whole situation was unfavourable for such an enterprise. He turned, therefore, to his small pile of books and, in particular, to his (1833, Malone) edition of *The Plays of William Shakespeare*. So passed fifteen weeks. Christmas arrived, and with it – football and plum pudding, excellent venison steak, and brandy in sufficient quantity to render the whole company 'merry and comfortable'. For all his own high standards of endurance, spartan vigour, and great expectations of his followers, Rae, it is clear, won the affection and the loyalty of all his men in 1846 as on his later arctic journeys. But, indeed, why should he not? He was a doctor, hunter, scientist, and liberal, who had not only kept his men in health and cheerful spirits for two hundred arctic days and nights; he had provided a plum pudding and, when necessary, the brandy, and would obviously bring the expedition to a safe, successful end.

At length, on 5 April 1847, Rae and a group of five proceeded with their survey work, leaving their base for Christie Lake, Point Hargrave, Colvile Bay, and Lord Mayor's Bay. Having traced the arctic shoreline to Cape Barclay and traversed six hundred miles on foot, the group returned to Repulse Bay, rejoining their companions at Fort Hope on May 5th.

> We arrived at our home at 8.30 p.m., all well, but so black and scarred on the face from the combined effects of oil, smoke, and frost bites, that our friends would not believe but that some serious accident from the explosion of gunpowder had happened to us. . . During our absence, everything had gone on prosperously at winter-quarters. The people had been all in good health, and the wound in Ouligbuck's arm had healed up. . . Ouligbuck had, notwithstanding the wound in his arm, killed four deer.

Venison and fish, chocolate and tea; food was abundant but there still remained the west side of the Melville Peninsula to explore. Leaving George Flett, a veteran of Peter Dease's trips, in charge of the supplies at Fort Hope, Rae and his men set off once more, on 13 May. The full extent of their success, and of Rae's speed and competence as an explorer, is well known. He traced the

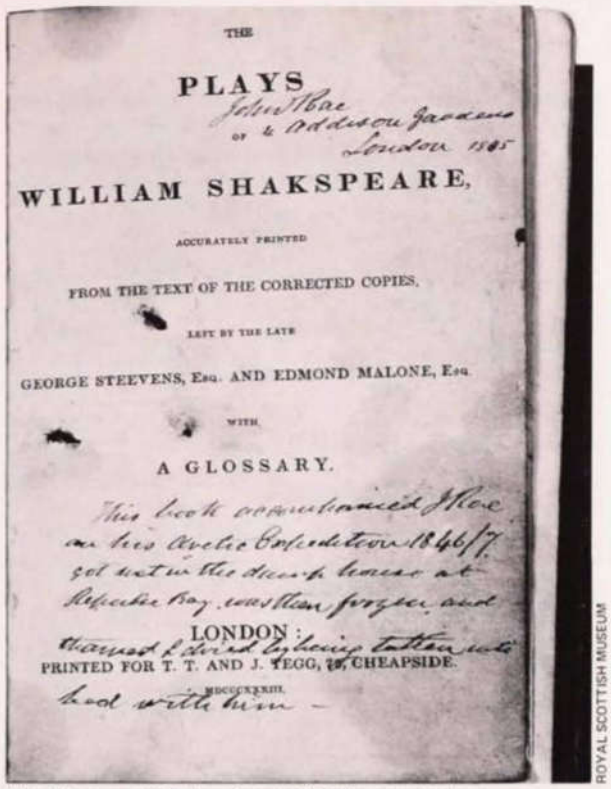
The deterioration of Fort Hope in recent years is evident in this recent photograph by Fred Bruemmer.

west coast of the Melville Peninsula to a point within eight miles of Fury and Hecla Strait, and, with Corrigal and Folster, Matheson, Mineau and Ouligbuck, was back at Fort Hope by the second week of June. All were healthy but somewhat leaner men.

Two more weeks having passed, Rae issued orders to remove the roof and glass from the stone house, and to transport the oars and masts to the boats. The party's stores and clothes were then put under summer tents, which Rae had pitched nearer the shore. After six weeks of scientific work ('two observatories had been built of snow, with a pillar of ice in each, the one for the dip circle, the other for a horizontally suspended needle') all preparations for the voyage to York Factory being complete, the group took to their boats once more. Roofless and stripped of glass and door, Fort Hope was left to fare as best it might with winds and ice.

It fared extremely well; for, although unprotected from the elements, it had been stoutly built close to the bedrock of its valley. Even the heaviest of snowfalls could inflict no more than gradual and minor damage on those massive walls. (That the snowfall could be heavy at Fort Hope had been made plain even in 1847 when, during Rae's absence of late May, huge quantities had pressed down on the roof of skins and oilcloth. While engaged in shovelling it off by night, the men had broken two boats' yards.) Not from effects of permafrost or snow, but rather from the intermittent but relentless leverage exerted between stones close to the bottom of the walls by frozen rain, would come the danger to Fort Hope. And yet – it stood. Unvisited by white men and not used again even by Rae himself when in the area – for Rae had seen and understood the relative advantage of the snow-house for the occasional southern visitor who meant to pass a winter in the North, and was quite willing to adapt his ways – of little interest or none to local Aivilik, and free from visits by the bears who would damage other comparable buildings in the Arctic, Fort Hope stood in silence. Ten years passed, then twenty. Then came Captain Charles F. Hall.

Hall passed four winters in the area of Repulse Bay. For four months, during the winter of 1865-66, he was within a day's march of Fort Hope which he, at length, on 9 February 1866, took time to visit. Rae's men, it was seen, had had some trouble from the rain which washed away their mud-cement even as they were plastering it between stones and into chinks in August 1846. Nonetheless, some of that mud-cement remained after two decades of neglect. 'Having occasion to visit Fort Hope' wrote Dr J. E. Nourse, editor of Hall's *Narrative of the Second Expedition*, Hall was much struck by 'its exposed position, and his notes express admiration of Dr. Rae's ability as the leader of an expedition, for having wintered his party of 1846 within its gloomy mud and stone walls without the loss of a man.' Hall at that time was none too well and shuddered


THE

PLAYS

John Rae
or 4 Addison Gardens
London 1865

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,

ACCURATELY PRINTED

FROM THE TEXT OF THE CORRECTED COPIES.

LEFT BY THE LATE

GEORGE STEEVENS, Esq. AND EDMOND MALONE, Esq.

WITH

A GLOSSARY.

This book accompanied J Rae
on his Arctic Boat Expedition 1846/7
got lost in the Snow house at
Repulse Bay, was then forgot and
left with him –

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. T. AND J. TEGG, 73, CHEAPSIDE.

MDCCCXXXIII.

ROYAL SCOTTISH MUSEUM

The title page of Rae's volume of Shakespeare's plays.

at the thought of staying long within such cold, gloomy walls. He hurried off, leaving Fort Hope in peace.

Fifty years passed. Did the occasional particularly well-read whaling captain make the journey from his ship at Harbour Islands to the North Pole River and the empty house? It is conceivable, but hardly likely. Whaling ships were numerous at Repulse Bay in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and were still coming up until the First World War. But Rae's house was sufficiently removed from the majority of whalers' winter quarters to be safe from pleasure trips in winter-time. Even if they had had some strong incentive to attempt the trip, few whalermen felt comfortable on snow-shoes.

Of visits made in living memory the first was that of Major L. T. Burwash, who in late May, 1926, passed by Fort Hope while on a wide inspection tour of the North for the Department of the Interior. Burwash, as it is plain even from his official narrative, published in Ottawa early in 1931 *(Canada's Western Arctic: A Report on Investigations in 1925-26, 1928-29, 1930)*, had no interest in Rae, and less in the thick walls beside the North Pole River. Still, it was his duty to record what he had seen. 'The site' he baldly noted, was 'the winter quarters used by Dr. Rae of the Hudson's Bay Company more than seventy years ago. The stone foundations of his building are still intact.' Burwash is eloquent despite himself: for, as is clear from a photograph of Fort Hope published in *The Beaver* in 1936,

part of the wall was 7½ feet high, that was, as it had looked when Rae had left it! Admittedly, the front wall on the right side of the entrance had collapsed. And very possibly the snow had drifted to a depth of several feet around the building, as it always had. But even so, had Major Burwash not realized that if he saw 'foundations' at the top of several feet of snow, then walls must be supporting them?

But, of course, there is no lack of other evidence that, in the late twenties, Fort Hope remained much the same as Rae had left it. Hudson's Bay Company manager at Repulse Bay in 1926 (and of the Western Arctic ten years later) was A. Copland. Copland, a native of Peterhead, home port for several of the Scottish arctic whalers still at Repulse Bay after the first years of this century, inspected Rae's old house during the summer of that year. Various sections of its massive walls, he recollects, stood quite intact and, when the ground was free of snow, were as high as a man.

During the 1930s Fort Hope remained half-intact. 'Foundations all around, and two walls quite high' wrote P. D. Baird in August 1938. Now, after almost forty years, it seems to him that the two walls in question were approximately six feet high. Matters had not changed greatly, it would also seem, when in August 1952 J. Brian Bird and his wife walked up John Rae's 'deep valley' to the Fort.

Bird, a professional geomorphologist, who was that summer working in the area for the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys (Geographical Branch), went to the trouble to record precisely what he saw:

> Unprotected, the cement has washed out of the walls which have partially collapsed. The north side of the house has suffered most severely, being reduced to little more than a pile of boulders, except for one cornerpiece. Part of the south wall is still five feet high. . . Two window openings are still in fairly good condition, with the window ledges about two feet thick.

Bird, as is evident from this and other parts of his description, was more struck by the extent of the decay of the whole structure than by his still finding a wall some five feet high. But this is a question of perspective, or of emphasis. In the opinion of the present writer, Dr Bird might no less justly have insisted on the fact that, after one full arctic century, part of Rae's building was still standing five feet high.

Shocking and sad, in any case, is a comparison of Dr Bird's two photographs with any photograph of the same site taken within the past five years. Consider, for example, the photograph (page 36) by Frederick Bruemmer, the photographer and writer who, for four of the last seven years, has lived among the Inuit and several times recrossed the North Pole River with the Aivilik.

By 1972, Fort Hope was in an advanced state of dilapidation. Whereas a few years earlier, the walls had

Fort Hope as it appeared in the 1930s when parts of the wall were still close to their original height of seven and one-half feet.

In 1952, when geomorphologist J. B. Bird took this photograph of his wife inside Fort Hope, the walls were still five feet high.

stood some five feet high, now they were four feet high in some sections, and two feet high in others. Bird had seen two window openings in fairly good condition; now, only one opening was obvious. Everywhere save at the corners, walls had fallen; nor were all those stones which, for a century, had formed the walls, in the positions where – if natural climatic factors were indeed solely responsible for their collapse – they should have fallen.

Had an outside agency assisted ice and wind in their (for so long, very gradual) destructive work? Or were the stones, once having been dislodged by wind and ice from their original positions, moved by that same outside agency? (Now, as a visit to the site reveals, some stones are widely scattered on the ground.) In the present writer's view, the fact of vandalism is painfully apparent.

There can be, of course, no doubt whatever that the outside agency in question comes by plane; nor is it open to dispute that, with increasing frequency, casual visits to Fort Hope and other sites in the Far North go unrecorded. Eskimo people *could* have caused damage at Fort Hope, searching for artifacts or stores left by John Rae or anything connected with his party which could readily be sold. Yet this is hardly likely. Aivilik in the vicinity are well aware that Old Fort Hope is nothing but an empty shell. For the collector of historic curiosities there is nothing in or by its walls. Who but outsiders would not know this? Who but southern tourists, or perhaps, employees of large mining or oil companies now active in the Arctic would, in hopes of a memento of their flying visit, scramble over 'old piles of stones', poking into chinks and holes, dislodging yet more rocks?

The problems of increasing pilferage and fresh damage done to nineteenth-century buildings by unknown and unseen visitors, are now to be felt everywhere in Canada's High Arctic where such buildings have survived. But at Fort Hope, one of the few large arctic structures of the first half of the nineteenth century that may still be called a structure and not just a site, the issue has been crystallized. This summer, and next summer, there will be more visitors. Some, one can say with confidence, will make swift, unrecorded, private journeys to Fort Hope; others, it must be feared, will leave their mark.

The answers to such problems are not clear. But one thing is certain: it is necessary that, at Fort Hope, a plaque carrying information and, perhaps, a plea for self-restraint, should be set up in the near future. ◆

THE HI'O CEREMONY

An ancient Indian custom still observed on the Lower Yukon

By Thomas F. Johnston

NULATO AND KALTAG are two remote Athabascan communities on the Lower Yukon, the first with a population of 308, the second with 206. In certain years, widows in one or other of the two villages decide to honour their deceased husbands. This is done by organizing a large potlatch and dance, at which time those who gave aid at the time of the deaths – the pallbearers and song-writers and speakers – are thanked and paid publicly and ceremonially. The occasion is known as the Feast For The Dead, and the special dance performed is known as the *hi'o* stick-dance, from the stripped spruce pole used.

The ceremony is held in mid-March, and during the preceding months the widows occasionally carry plates of food to the men being thanked. Relatives of the widows prepare a collection of gifts for the occasion, including blankets, scarves, tanned furs, and bolts of cloth. These are intended for general distribution. A special collection of gifts, consisting primarily of winter clothing, is destined for the men who acted as pallbearers. To assure plentiful food for the event, the menfolk of the widows set aside moose meat.

The ceremony has its serious side, as a widow remembers her lost husband and weeps.

When the festivities commence, dog-sled races are held in the daytime; potlatching occupies the evenings. On the first evening the men of the village file into the community hall via one door and the women by another door. The widows organizing the event must wear very old and worn clothes.

The floor of the community hall is covered with strips of butcher paper, for the guests will kneel as they eat. To refuse a particular item of food is considered impolite, but it is permissible to take excess food home in a grocery sack for later use. The selection includes deep-fried moose, baked whitefish over rice, pilot bread, duck soup, moose stew, cups of seal oil (a taste for this oil was acquired during trade with the Eskimos to the west), and two types of 'ice cream' – a mixture of raisins, lard, and whitefish; and a mixture of rose hips, lard, and salmon. After the food has been cleared away, the widows take the floor and perform their own repertory of mourning songs. These songs are of a proprietory nature, belonging to the family. The mourning dance – a gentle swaying while holding a kerchief between the hands – is performed. The evening concludes with speeches by the organizers.

On the next two or three evenings, after supper is concluded, women of the village get up to dance to the accompaniment of a moose-skin drum. They sing the rhythmic dance-songs which characterize the Interior Athabascans throughout Alaska – an earthy, repetitive chanting of vocables with the emphasis heavily upon the drum downbeats, and much use of glottal pulsation (a shaking of the tone from the larynx). At some point during the fifth night, the dancers disappear out of the door, to return a few moments later. This is quickly followed by a loud thumping on the door, wood against wood. The door opens to reveal a group of men carrying a stripped spruce pole, decorated with ribbons.

The men lash the pole to a crossbeam in the skylight, and clockwise dancing around the pole commences, the men near the pole, the women further away. Fourteen special songs are sung, called *hi'o keleka*. They must not be sung at any time other than at the Feast For The Dead. The gifts for general distribution are then rolled within long bolts of calico and 'danced' around the pole. A frequent game is for the young men to attempt to loosen the pole.

Dr Johnston, an ethnomusicologist, is engaged in research into Alaskan native music, and teaching at the University of Alaska. Photographs are published with permission of the University of Alaska Museum.

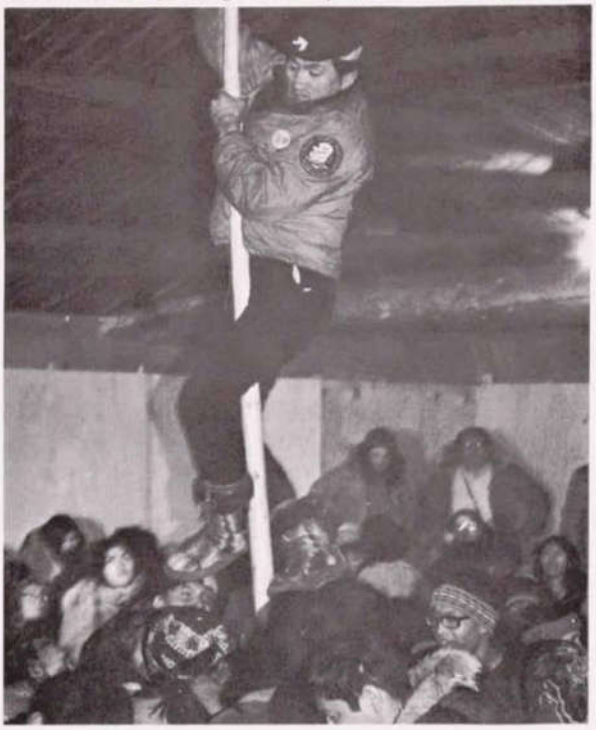
When they succeed in doing so, they 'dance' it around the village and back, later refastening it to the crossbeam and tearing off the ribbons for luck.

On the sixth night the most serious part of the ceremonies take place. The pallbearers and others who assisted at the burial of the husbands of the widows are fed first, receiving items of food which are known to have been favourite dishes of the deceased. Then, in total silence, the pallbearers remove their outer garments behind a six-foot green canvas screen, donning fresh clothing taken from five or six large laundry bags lying on the floor behind the screen. The clothing includes knitted socks, handmade rabbit-skin parkas, moose-and-calfskin boots with beaded tops, and moose-hide mittens. Quietly, the pallbearers put their old clothing into the bags and walk from the hall. Upon their return there is much weeping. The other gifts are now distributed to those who took part in the funeral service.

On the seventh day, the pallbearers visit all of the houses of the village, shaking hands with everyone. On that evening, there is a final potlatch and what is known locally as the Mask Dance. For this, the hall is divided into two by a canvas draped across a rope. Women carry in food, followed by the men who do likewise. The food-carrying is done in this fashion: a group within the hall sing Eskimo-style songs, using the Eskimo *ai-ya-yanga* vocables and accompanied by the Eskimo membrane-covered frame-drum. Each person entering places his dish on a flat place on the canvas, and performs an Eskimo-style hand-motion dance. As the men enter, two women sit on upturned boxes rhythmically waving stripped wooden sticks. For the entrance of the women, two men do likewise. After this 'acculturated' dancing, the food is eaten and the week-long event comes to a close without any further formality.

This Athabascan *hi'o* ceremony on the Lower Yukon achieves four goals: it lays to rest the wandering spirit of the deceased; it repays the obligation to those who assisted at the burial; it reduces the loss by mystically enabling the pallbearers to assume the identity of the deceased; and it provides an emotional release for the community after the height of the winter, reuniting distant relatives and cementing ties with trading partners and other friends in neighbouring communities. ◆

One of the best hunters is assigned to fasten the spruce pole to the crossbeam, while guests wait for the dance to begin.



Gifts for the villagers are rolled in a bolt of cloth and 'danced' around the pole. The furs on the pole will later be cut into strips for use as ruffs on parkas.

JOHNNY HARRIS OF SANDON

By Norman M. Carter

WHEN I WAS YOUNG I lived in the Slocan area of British Columbia, that beautiful southeast corner where mountain peaks rise straight up from narrow valleys, their snowy crests reflected all year round in deep blue lakes. The Slocan lies within the boundaries of the Kootenay District and it was galena ore, rich in lead, silver, and zinc, that built the towns there in the last years of the nineteenth century. The coming of the railroads in 1895 made the development of the ore deposits practical.

In the 1920s my father was the only dentist to serve a floating population of some ten thousand people, and my family lived in New Denver. Once called Eldorado City, New Denver was one of a number of towns that grew up along the shores of the alpine lakes and served the mines as bedroom communities. Sandon was where the mines were and where most of the fathers worked, and Sandon with its hotels and saloons, its rows of shops, its opera house and its gambling houses and churches belonged to Johnny Harris.

Everyone knew about Johnny Harris when I was a boy. His exploits had been table-talk in New Denver homes for thirty years. His story is the story of Sandon.

The first Slocan discoveries had been made in 1891 and in the spring of the following year Johnny Harris made his way, on foot, up Carpenter Creek from the winter camp then known as Eldorado City. When he reached the narrow canyon at the base of Payne mountain where the original discovery of ore had been made, he scraped away the snow and staked his claim. On this claim grew the city of Sandon.

Five years later Sandon had a population of two thousand and, according to the *British Columbia Year Book* of 1897, seventeen hotels, five general stores, three lumber dealers and saw-mills, and more than a dozen other places of business, including banks, hardware and drug stores, tobacco shops, a jeweller, a hospital and a brewery.

The town also had two newspapers – *The Paystreak* – established in 1896 by E. C. Russell, and *The Mining Review* which appeared the following year. *The Paystreak* was, for most of its lifetime, the one-man effort of its editor – Colonel R. T. Lowery, a colourful, energetic little man whose editorials leave an insight into life in the Sandon mines.

The miner is the backbone of every mining camp. It is upon the money that he earns that we, who live in the towns hard by, get our daily bread and other luxuries. It is for him principally that the saloons are fitted up in gorgeous style. It is for him that the storekeeper is waiting so that he may pay his bills. It is through his hard work that many men in capital are enabled to ride in carriages and dine with dukes in Europe. He gets $3.50 a day in the Slocan and for this amount he pounds a drill and lacerates rocks in the darkness of the tunnel or shaft. He occasionally is assisted up the golden stairs by a premature blast, and sometimes gets introduced to St Peter by the aid of a snowslide. Being of so much value to the community, his life should be freed from danger as much as possible. One way to do this is to have all buildings at the mines built in such a manner as to obviate the danger from slides, and render it unnecessary for men to flee for their lives, as has been done during the past week.

Sandon was the terminus of two railways. The CPR that connected with Calgary did not have enough room to turn around, and backed the two miles into town. The other, the Kaslo and Slocan, a narrow-gauge line operated by the Great Northern Railway, clung to the cliffs a thousand feet above the town. So precarious was its situation that (according to the Honourable George

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Author and lecturer Norman Carter is an historical geographer who, in his childhood, accompanied his father on visits to Sandon.

Photographs, except where noted, are from the B.C. Archives.

Mr J. M. (Johnny) Harris.

Green who was born in nearby Kaslo) passengers were moved to the mountain side of the coaches by the train crew. It was feared that if the miners rushed to the open side in their eagerness for their first view of Sandon that they might literally fall into the town, train and all.

Johnny Harris grew with the city that erupted on his claim. He had been a real estate agent in Idaho and had never worked in the mines. He went into the hotel business almost at once and did his mining through prospectors whom he grub-staked in return for a share of their findings.

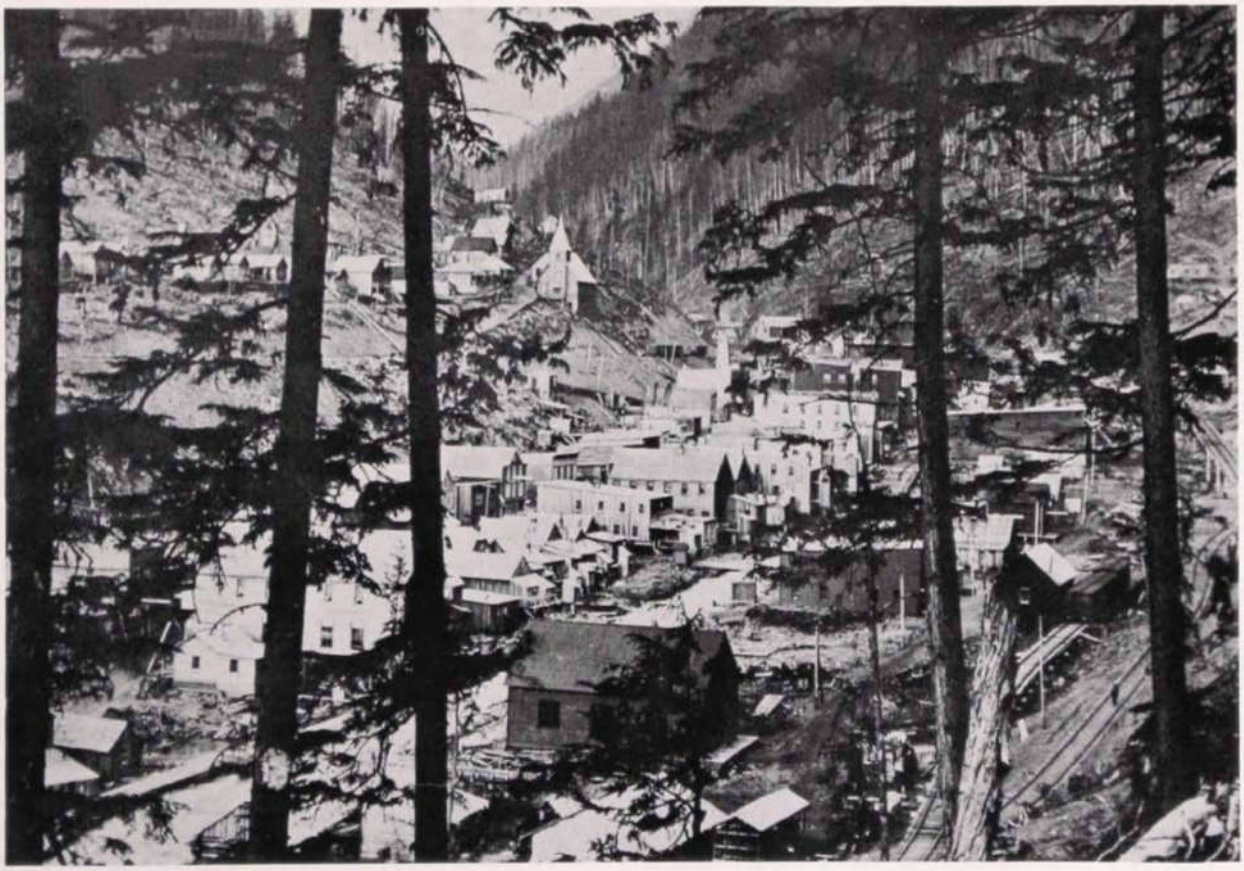
The mines that dotted the hillsides – among them the Noble Five, Lucky Jim, the Vulture and the Coin – produced ore so rich that in some cases it did not need to be concentrated. The Last Chance, just a mile above town, shipped a car of ore that returned $1,500 to its owners every day.

Around 1899 Mr Harris left Sandon, according to Jim Hazelwood who journeyed there to interview the aging hotel owner for the *Vancouver Sun* in September 1950. 'He went to Virginia and built a mansion' wrote Hazelwood. 'Expensive rugs, paintings and riding horses soon adorned the estate and relatives moved in. A few years later he left to return to Sandon to undergo the spectacle of watching his beloved city wither before his eyes.'

During his absence, several ill-advised strangers who did not know the shrewd Harris, started to build a combined store, dance hall and entertainment centre at the end of Sandon's street. They built it on land that belonged to Harris who, on his return, waited until it was completed, sued, and won his case. He then organized a theatrical company to produce for two nights a play called 'Bitter Atonement'. After the curtains closed on the night of 3 May 1900 a fire broke out backstage. Funnelled down the narrow gulch by the prevailing winds the fire spread rapidly. Someone had previously cut the fire hose with an axe, it was stated in an account of earlier days in Sandon, published in the *Vancouver Province*, 25 July 1942.

On the morning of 4 May 1900, twelve hundred homeless people looked down from the mountain sides on a scene of utter desolation. One small hotel, the power house, a big barn used to house the mules that worked in the mines, and a collection of shacks had survived. With the ground still steaming from the fire Johnny Harris rebuilt the barn and the shacks into the Reco Hotel. His credit was good. With huge

A view of Sandon, British Columbia, 1898.



sums borrowed from the banks and the mining companies he organized the rebuilding of his city. He ordered in carloads of lumber as fast as it could be cut and shipped. He put miners to work on the creek bed, cribbing it with bins of logs filled with boulders, and fluming it so that the water roared straight through. Over this foundation they laid a decking of heavy timber and on top placed wagon loads of crushed low-grade ore. Sandon could now claim, with truth, to be a city whose streets were paved with silver. Along both sides of this new street Johnny Harris and others erected the first fifty buildings. Priority was given to hotels – The Filbert, The Palace, The Sandon House – followed by the Virginia Block, the Miner's Union Hall, and a line of business establishments. The first hotels were built of green lumber. The miners worked in shifts and the hotel beds were occupied the same way. Several writers have recorded that as the lumber dried out there was less and less privacy in Sandon. The new city was still confined within the canyon walls and its streets were narrow. According to a contemporary wit, you met the same person coming and going so many times a day that the population appeared larger and busier than it really was – and Sandon was busy.

In 1905 there were 135 mining properties; 35 of them had shipped out ore. The *British Columbia Year Book* of that year lists dividends paid to date – Payne $1,500,000, Last Chance $275,000, Whitewater $250,000, Ruth $350,000, Slocan Star $450,000, Idaho $300,000 and Reco $350,000.

Down to the canyon floor, day and night, the big horse-drawn ore wagons rumbled. They were a strange sight. Because they were loaded on the mountain slope and had to take their loads downhill, they had giant wheels in front and smaller ones behind. Thus they stood more or less level until they reached the flat of the loading platforms at the stations. Here the drivers had merely to unlatch the tailgate and the ore emptied itself.

With minor setbacks prosperity and progress continued through the years. From time to time business men would leave and hotel owners, having made their stake, would go elsewhere. Johnny Harris would acquire their holdings. He was a promoter, a speculator and a business man with a nice sense of timing. More mines opened and a few brick buildings began to appear here and there amongst the original frame landmarks.

At this time there was a Mrs Harris. Dr R. S. Goodwin, who now lives in Vancouver and who worked as a youth on one of the paddle-wheel steamers on Kootenay Lake, recalls that 'about 1908' he went with a friend to visit a girl whose father was superintendent of one of the mines. His friend, while in Sandon, was stricken with food poisoning and had to remain behind in the Reco Hotel where he was well cared for by Mrs Johnny Harris.

Up until 1913 smelters had charged a penalty for removing zinc from silver-lead ore. Then in three years the price of zinc trebled and Johnny Harris and his town found themselves sitting on thousands of

Sandon in 1897. Three years later these buildings were destroyed by fire.

tons of ore, much of it already mined and dumped because of its high zinc content. In 1920 prices slumped a bit but improvements in smelting techniques made up the difference. Those were prosperous years.

From 1917 on, my father had his office in our home at New Denver. Two or three days a month he would take portable equipment to Sandon to preach the gospel of clean teeth and healthy bodies and do rough-and-ready dentistry. He would, as well, take home some $250 in fees and a like sum in laboratory work to be done at his convenience.

I sometimes accompanied my father on his Sandon trips. Johnny Harris provided his two best upper-floor front rooms in the Reco Hotel. My father swung a big banner outside reading DENTIST. While he eased the suffering of a steady stream of miners, merchants, card sharps, and ordinary citizens, I was free to roam the town: to watch the ore buckets on their endless tramline circuits, to ride up the canyon in the empty wagons, and to give the rooms of the Reco Hotel my closest scrutiny. Johnny Harris had furnished them with elegance and flair. The Reco had steam heat, hot and cold running water in every room, and a call bell for room service. In a day when a miner made $3.50 a day, a room in the Reco was $10. If a customer could not afford this rate he was redirected down the street where Johnny Harris had other hotels at other prices, all of them clean, warm and comfortable. The other hotels sold whisky; the Reco served chilled champagne. Its dining room featured five-course meals on damask table-cloths with polished silver; its specialty, served by Chinese chefs, was wild mallard with orange glaze, the envy of the Hotel Davenport in Spokane. Potted palms and singing birds in cages provided atmosphere and in the lobby were hand-carved chairs with leather cushions, battleship linoleum, and ferns concealing the brass spittoons.

Off the lobby was a private parlour with ore samples in glass cases, and tables around which business deals were discussed in quiet tones. The place had the reassuring smell of good cigar smoke, leather, and floor wax. I was not allowed to go into either the card room or the bar but sometimes the man cleaning up would let me peek through the opened door. I caught glimpses of plate-glass mirrors and pictures of famous mines framed in walnut and gold, an ornate dark wooden bar, the gleam of polished brass and the sparkle of bottles.

One memorable night in 1922 I was awakened in the hotel room by my father and, muffled in my dressing gown, led across the carpet with its pink and blue flowers, down the grand staircase and into the parlour. Johnny Harris was presiding over a serious lot of men grouped around a table on which sat a metal box. Its front was encrusted with knobs and dials and it emitted an eerie light, a low-pitched hum, and a metallic smell.

The Kaslo and Slocan train at Sandon, 1910.

Packer Percy Johnson takes a pack train out of Sandon with equipment for the Slocan Star mine, c. 1904.

The silent men were wearing headphones. Room was made for me at the table and one phone was turned on its wearer's head so that I might press my ear against it. I heard strange undulating music. Later I learned that it was coming from Florinda, Iowa and that it was everywhere in the air around us. Johnny Harris bought each new model radio as it appeared on the market so that his guests might enjoy the best. This 'first of all' model was a Thermodyne and had cost as much as a Model T Ford. My father bought it for $180 when Johnny Harris got his new Atwater-Kent.

Over all of Sandon Johnny Harris presided and he liked the best of everything. He dressed in his own version of what a mining engineer should wear on Sunday but with more jewellery, including a beautiful diamond stickpin. He changed his shirt several times a day, and spoke with a cultured Virginian accent, his words coming softly through teeth that shone with prominent gold and were stained with tobacco juice.

One day he arrived at our home in New Denver in pain from a toothache that he had been suffering for weeks. My father told him that he would have to have all of his teeth removed. They were beyond restoration and were poisoning his system.

Johnny Harris was a vain man and his teeth were almost a trade-mark. 'Doc' he said 'If I go back up there with my face all sunk in, and gumming food I'll be laughed out of town. I don't want anyone to know that I've had them pulled. I don't care how you do it, or what it costs, I don't want anyone to know'.

My father was delighted. For the first time since he had left college he was going to have a chance to actually do what he had been trained to do. Johnny Harris moved into our upstairs bedroom and in two days my father had extracted all his teeth and from them had made a set of plates. Johnny Harris went home to Sandon feeling, he said, as though he had hot saucers in his mouth. For the next month my father worked with his little electric furnace staining artificial teeth to the right shade of tobacco brown, and fitting them with gold crowns and inlays. During these weeks my mother kept the spare bedroom made up and Johnny Harris made several trips down from Sandon so that my father could match the colour of the new teeth with the originals in the pale northern afternoon light. My father, after discussion with the family said that he was going to bill Johnny Harris for $150. (In those days a full set of plates cost little more than $25). At last the fine new dentures were modified to the satisfaction of all; the visits stopped and father received a cheque for $350 with a note that read 'Thank Mrs Carter for her hospitality and understanding, and buy the little lady some flowers.'

Little is known about the first Mrs Harris who was said to have lived at the Reco during the first decade of the century. She was not in evidence during my early visits and it may have been that she died prior to this period. In any event, Johnny Harris began to feel the need of a woman in his life in the early 1930s – someone who would give him a woman's view and assist him as a partner in his various undertakings. He liked women with spirit. He admired the dance hall girls who came to Sandon to make a stake and move on. He respected their courage and business ability, but in every other way he found them shallow and unsatisfactory. He was not apt to find the sort of companion he had in mind in Sandon so he decided to advertise in the Calgary and Spokane papers for a secretary-receptionist. The duties, as stated in the ad, were vague. Reference was made to the rigours of the climate and restrictions of life in a remote mining camp. At the same time it was mentioned that Sandon did have an opera house and churches of various faiths.

Unusual ladies answered these unusual ads. If Johnny Harris sensed that needed spark in the replies he wrote offering to pay the fare if they would come for an interview. He shared his plans with Dan Morgan, a male nurse who ran the emergency hospital in Sandon, and with my father.

The train from Calgary bypassed New Denver on its climb up the mountains to Sandon but paused briefly at a little siding about a mile above our town. My father would know in advance when one of the applicants was arriving and with considerable interest would cancel his morning appointments and walk up to meet the train. While it was gathering steam, father would walk briefly through the coaches looking at the passengers, locate the one in question, make a fast appraisal, and on his return home phone Johnny Harris at Sandon with his opinion. Johnny Harris would then send Dan Morgan up to Sandon station while he positioned himself on the roof of the Reco Hotel with his binoculars. The train would back in, the passengers would get off and Dan Morgan would engage the lady in conversation while Johnny Harris watched. A hand signal from Harris was all that was needed to complete the transaction. If he turned his thumb down Morgan would tell the lady in tones of regret that Mr Harris was truly sorry, but the position had already been filled. He hoped that the contents of the envelope, now offered, would reimburse her for her time and trouble. More often than not the young lady got right back on the train but occasionally one with spirit, but adjudged in the preliminary survey to have little else, would not take no for an answer. Getting off the train she would head down town to find work behind the counter or with the 'Red Curtain sisters'. Occasionally one would pass the triple test, be hired and remain in Johnny Harris's employ for a period of time.

Finally, an applicant who filled all the qualifications in generous measure arrived bearing with her a full set of golf clubs. She was hired on arrival, was eminently satisfactory and best of all, seemed to like the life of a chatelaine. Johnny Harris was now sixty-two years of age and she about twenty and he is said to have made her a business proposition. If she would marry him, he would make her his business partner and on his death she would become sole owner of the power plant, several hotels, most of the business blocks and shares in the producing mines – a considerable fortune. The two were married and went south on their honeymoon and when they returned they had acquired a beautiful Lincoln car for which Johnny had paid $2,000. It was shipped to Silverton by paddle-wheel steamer and there everyone had ample time to admire it, since it was found that it was too long to turn the corners on the ten miles of wagon road that led up the mountain to Sandon. Johnny Harris rounded up some miners, provided horses and powder and widened the corners and switchbacks so that the car could be driven home. And there it sat. After six months a police officer and a customs official arrived in Sandon. Johnny Harris later admitted that they had charged him $2,000 duty on the Lincoln and had fined him a further $2,000 for evading customs. About a year later the $6,000 Lincoln failed to negotiate a turn coming out from Sandon and ended up in Carpenter Creek. There it became a shrine for a whole generation of little boys, who for years after used to climb up the creek from Silverton and drive it in their Saturday dreams.

During these years Mrs Harris's young sister, a girl of my own age who was an invalid, came to Sandon. Johnny Harris, in his typical open-handed way, had invited her to live with them for a time. He had a special sleigh built for her that was drawn by two big, white dogs. As they flashed down the street past the fire hydrants that were built extra tall to keep their tops above the snow in winter, they presented a memorable picture.

Mention has been made of the 'Great Fire' of 1900 that levelled the town. There were other major fires. Death by premature or delayed explosions in the mines was a monthly occurrence, and as the years went by an increasing number of avalanches took their toll in human lives.

George P. Stewart, who was born in Sandon in 1907 and who lived there working in the mines until 1942, has written a detailed account of the major catastrophes in an article entitled 'Sandon' in *Pioneer Days in British Columbia,* published by BC Outdoors, 1973. According to him the lot of the miner in Sandon had grown much worse since the days of Colonel Lowery's crusading editorial. Equipment that was worn out had not been replaced and the frequency of accidents in the mines increased. He tells how in the 1930s nearly everyone in the town was on relief. There was no money for fuel and people cut their own wood. Although there were those who were careful not to cut trees on the steeper hillsides or above the houses or in the cuts on the mountain faces, there were others who were lazy and thoughtless. Their indiscriminate cutting left nothing to retain the tons of snow that built up at higher elevations and often actually directed the avalanches towards the townsite. Stewart recounts the story of the death of his own little girl.

Johnny Harris with his wife, Alma, and the author's father, Dr Norman Carter. From the Carter family album.

. . . What made me look up the hillside I will never know, but there bearing down on me was a snowslide. With a terrifying roar and massive wind it swept past, enveloping me in white. Fortunately, I was on the edge and escaped uninjured. An old fellow, John McLeod, had a cabin nearby and he ran out. I told him to give me a shovel – my little girl was in the slide. I took the shovel and was running back when I heard him shout. Looking up I saw another massive slide – tons of snow, trees, and other debris rumbling down on me. Again I was forced to flee. Then all was still.

I began to scramble over the snow and debris, then suddenly realized that my father's house was under tons of snow. Running towards the back, I saw the kitchen was still stand-

Johnny Harris's Virginia Hotel, one of the few buildings to survive the flood of 1955.

ing, though badly twisted. As I looked I saw my wife and mother crawling over the snow near the woodshed. Dad had also survived, but Evelyn was under tons of snow.

All the townspeople were quickly at the scene and old men, young men, women and children began digging. Mr. J. M. Harris, founder of Sandon and owner of the Sandon Light and Water Company, strung wires and erected floodlights to enable work to continue during darkness. By 11 o'clock that night everyone was exhausted and went home – not to sleep, but to rest. Lights shone from most homes all night. Early the next day volunteer crews arrived from New Denver and Silverton. There was no means of tranportation since the roads were blocked but these men had waded in snow to their knees the whole way, some of them for 13 miles. The citizens took them into their homes and fed them, then they started the gigantic task of tunneling into the 25-foot deep snow in search of our six-year-old daughter. I never left the scene. At 10 o'clock on Friday a workman came and said they had found her. She lay against a chair where our dining room had been.

The Great Depression caught the aging Johnny Harris faster than it did the Sandon mines, for he had been investing and losing money, not in the things he knew so well, but in wheat futures. His mines, too, were a drain on his finances. In order to maintain the right to operate a mine in British Columbia a specified amount of assessment work had to be done on it each year, whether the mine was operating or not.

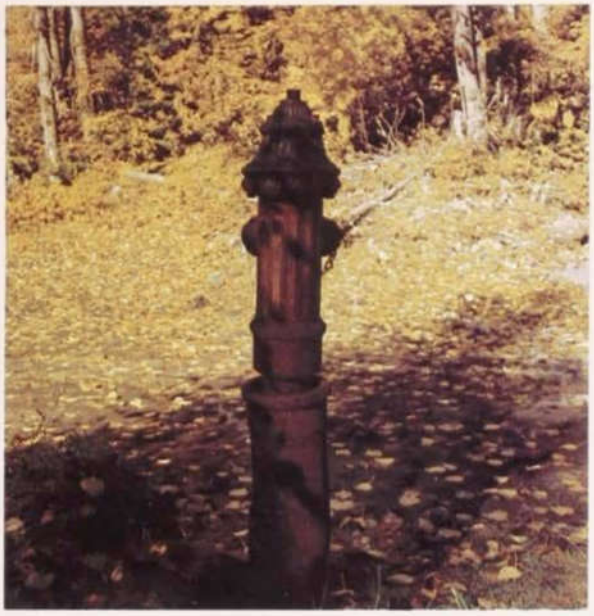
In order to retain control of his better mines he had to put up cash for assessment work; these mines returned little more than enough to cover the wages of the men. The residents of Sandon were not paying their light bills and his hotels had few paying guests.

The 1930s passed into the 1940s and with the coming of the war Sandon became an internment camp for people of Japanese ancestry from the Coast. The Harrises now had paying customers for electricity coming from two dynamos put in place in 1896 and still running with their original leather belts. They had tenants for their buildings and they still operated the Reco Hotel. Mrs Harris was receptionist, chambermaid, cook, and waitress. Lemon and orange trees were coaxed into bloom in the lobby and Siamese cats and collie dogs were added to the decor. At the war's end the quiet Japanese left and Sandon became a ghost town.

I last saw Johnny Harris in the summer of 1953. Mrs Harris brought him into the lobby of the Reco Hotel in a wheel chair. He was small and transparent. His white shirt was spotless and his shawl was held in place with his large diamond stickpin. He remembered me. He told me that he had recently had his ninety-second birthday, (he was actually eighty-nine) and proudly showed me a telegram that he had received from the Queen. I could see that Mrs Harris had once been a very handsome woman. As she wheeled him away I noticed that the elbows were worn through the sleeves of her sweater.

One late June day in 1955 Carpenter Creek, swollen by the melting of an unusually thick snow pack, reached a volume heavy enough to start the great granite boulders moving in its downhill bed. The cribbing that Johnny Harris had placed there fifty years before, now rotting and sodden, was unable to withstand the flood. Slowly the street began to sag and buckle and in minutes it had dissolved into the roaring river that swept with it two blocks of frontier buildings. The seven families that were still living in Sandon escaped with their lives over a railway trestle that dipped to meet the torrent as they felt their way across it.

The *Nelson News* in writing its obituary of Sandon remarked 'It's good that Mr Harris isn't here to see his town go. He died a year ago.' ◆



One of Sandon's fire hydrants, built tall to keep its top above the winter snow, still stands in the deserted valley, and below, Carpenter Creek flows past abandoned buildings.

Photographs by Liz and Jack Bryan.

HUDSON'S BAY MISCELLANY, 1670-1870

Edited with introduction by Glyndwr Williams. Volume XXX, Hudson's Bay Record Society, Winnipeg, 1975. 245 pages. Issued to members of the Society.

Application for membership ($7.50 a year; one volume published every second year) should be addressed to the Secretary, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 77 Main St., Winnipeg R3C 2R1.

Reviewed by John S. Galbraith.

Old timers in the fur trade used to say that the initials H B C stood for Here Before Christ. Measured by the longevity of other companies, the Hudson's Bay Company has had a phenomenal life span, sufficiently so that the hyperbole merely provides an exclamation mark. This long life, however, was made possible only by a rare ability to adjust to change. No enterprise subject to such infirmities of old age as hardening of the arteries and loss of energy and imagination would have survived. The appearance of the latest volume of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, as the editor notes, marks the end of an era; it also opens a new one. The shift of the archives to Canada and, with it, the series of publications, evokes nostalgia for those of us who have studied in London; it also produces a keen sense of anticipation for the research which will be conducted in the magnificent new facilities in Winnipeg.

My involvement with the archives goes back to 1951 when it was housed in – or rather under – Bishopsgate. Readers as a diversion from their work could look up and see the feet of pedestrians through the translucent glass of the sidewalk, not a particularly exciting view, but certainly unique. My main recollection was of the cold which is perhaps more frigid in retrospect than it actually was, but was real enough to produce in effete Americans a pronounced shivering, only slightly relieved by hot pipes under the table on which the student could warm his feet while the rest of the body was turning blue. Despite these discomforts, the habitués of the Bishopsgate Archives were much attached to the place, and the move to Beaver House was an occasion for regret, made more intense by the fact that in the new location the archives seemed lost in a building devoted to the current business operations of the Company. Now in Winnipeg, the archives has a home befitting the rich scholarly resources it possesses.

Through all these changes one element has remained constant. Each of the archivists, R. H. G. Leveson Gower, Alice Johnson, Joan Craig, and the present incumbent, Shirlee A. Smith, has been first-rate in ability to maintain the archives and to organize its resources to facilitate their use by scholars and in helpfulness to students who have varying degrees of clarity as to what they wanted and why they wanted it. From Alice Johnson's day on, the editorial work on Record Society volumes has set a standard unsurpassed by any other series reproducing scholarly documents. That fact is a reflection both of the meticulousness of the archival staff and of the abilities of the general editors, Messrs Rich, Davies, and Williams.

This last volume from the London-based archives, like its predecessors, is impeccably edited. Unlike previous volumes, however, this one reproduces four documents which, at first glance, seem to have little in common beyond their involving the activities of the Company. They range from the Albany Fort Journal of 1705-1706 to George Simpson's 'Character Book' of 1831-1832. Included also is a narrative by an unidentified Company officer of the French raids on York and Churchill in 1782 and James Tate's Journal of 1809-1812, dealing largely with the violent conflict between the Hudson's Bay Company and its North West rivals – such disparate documents justify the volume's title of *Hudson's Bay Miscellany;* indeed, it might seem to be a pot-pourri of ingredients which defy assimilation into a homogeneous whole. That impression would be erroneous. The General Editor wisely decided that for this commemorative volume it would be more appropriate to publish documents representing various aspects of the first two hundred years of the Company's history rather than to select only one.

The Albany Post Journal, the oldest to survive, has little literary merit. It is devoted almost exclusively to matter-of-fact recordings of the events of the day and has almost nothing to say about the ambience of life in the fur trade or the thoughts of the author, Anthony Beale. Beale was not writing for posterity, but his details give us considerable insight into the problems of survival for both traders and Indians, the character of the trade, the omnipresent fear of a French raid. The French menace is also the theme of a narrative by an unidentified officer at Churchill who describes the capture of Forts Churchill and York in 1782. This assault by forces under Comte de la Pérouse has been described by various writers, principally French participants. The action had little to do with the outcome of the larger war in which the British and French were engaged, but for the Hudson's Bay Company it was a serious blow. The measure of the development of the Company since Beale's journal, however, was that it could absorb these losses and in a few years be again paying dividends to its stockholders. The uncertain settlement on the Bay of 1705 had become a powerful organization which could withstand a catastrophe and still survive. The effect of the disruption on the Indians who had become dependent on Churchill and York was devastating. Many died and others were left destitute. The calamity was compounded by smallpox, which had spread from the Indians of what is now southwestern United States all the way to Hudson Bay.

James Tate's Journal of 1809-1812 also recounts the story of conflict, in this case with an antagonist more formidable than the French, the North West Company. This narrative, a fascinating account of the most turbulent era in the Company's history, begins with the shooting of the North Wester Aeneas Macdonell by John Mowat, in what would appear to have been justifiable homicide during an assault on the Hudson's Bay post at Eagle Lake. Mowat was subsequently taken into

custody by a North West party and carried off for trial in Canada, accompanied by Tate and two other Hudson's Bay men. The journal is a poignant account of their harrowing experiences – Mowat nearly died of his wounds and lack of medical attention. But there were also manifestations of kindness from some of their captors and in Montreal a benefactor named Robert Wilson, otherwise unidentified, interceded in their behalf. Eventually Mowat was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to six months' imprisonment and branding on the thumb, an indication of uncertainty about his guilt among a jury in the North Westers' own capital. Tate's journal, remarkably well written in view of his having had only an elementary education in Scotland, is an absorbing narrative of a violent struggle.

George Simpson's 'Character Book', the *pièce de resistance* of the volume, represents the Great Monopoly at its most efficient under the administration of a governor whose powers were perfectly attuned to the requirements of the new era. Simpson, when he wrote this evaluation of his senior officers, was in ill health and beset by tragedy in his family. But, contrary to the persistent myth that his pen dripped acid, his assessments were, with a few exceptions, clear-headed and dispassionate, reflecting clinical judgements on the worth of each officer and, in the case of the chief traders, their suitability for promotion. The publication of the 'Character Book' is a fitting conclusion to a volume celebrating the first two centuries of the Hudson's Bay Company. We now look forward to the new era under the management of a Canadian general editor and his staff; they have a high standard to maintain.

Author of 'The Little Emperor', Dr Galbraith is Professor of History, University of California.

SISKIYOU TRAIL:
The Hudson's Bay Fur Company Route to California

By Richard Dillon. McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1975. 381 pages, illus. $9.95.

Reviewed by Glyndwr Williams

Richard Dillon, head of the Sutro Library in San Francisco, has produced an attractive addition to the 'American Trails Series'. The Siskiyou Trail was the name given to the inland route from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River south to California which was pioneered by the fur traders of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. No single journey of discovery revealed the trail in its entirety. From the Willamette the Hudson's Bay men Peter Ogden, John Work, Alexander McLeod and Michel Laframboise worked their way southward; meeting them from that direction came the American trappers, Jedediah Smith and Ewing Young in particular. By 1840 the trail was known, but largely unmapped; that task was carried out by an American party led by Lieutenant Emmons (an offshoot of the Wilkes expedition of 1838-42) which in 1841 followed and surveyed the whole length of the trail from Fort Vancouver to San Francisco Bay. In a way the use of the word 'trail' is a misnomer; across the rugged country so well described by Mr Dillon there were several alternative routes. None was easy; there were no great rivers to carry the traders and their goods along. With horses and mules they toiled through a wilderness where freakish variations of weather and climate, natural obstacles, insects, illness, and the hovering Indians provided a never-ending series of worries. Slowly and laboriously they climbed out of the Willamette Valley, over the Umpqua and Rogue Rivers, across the barrier of the Siskiyou Mountains, onto the Klamath River, and finally down the Sacramento Valley. Other routes were tried closer to the coast, yet others further inland on the Pit River. The region was never as rich in beaver as rumour suggested, and by the late forties the trail was already falling into disuse when the discovery of gold brought thousands of adventurers onto paths previously known only to the local Indians and a few dozen fur trappers.

That is Mr Dillon's story, and he tells it well. He has read the journals, has consulted (and acknowledged) the work of his predecessors among fur-trade historians, and has used his own knowledge of the area to good effect. The personalities involved, the terrain, the relations between the trappers and the Indians are all vividly described. In the best sense of the term the book is a popularizing account. It illumines a subject to readers who would have no access to the specialist volumes on Ogden and the rest. Mr Dillon has a lively, colloquial style, though in places he overdoes the dramatic touch. We read, for example, of how Alexander Mackenzie 'staggered to a seaside boulder' on reaching the Pacific coast on 22 February 1793; a glance at Mackenzie's journal shows that the explorer, far from being *in extremis*, coolly spent much of the day taking astronomical observations. Some minor factual errors might also be mentioned: George Simpson's description of Fort George was made in 1824, not (as implied on pp. 9-10) in the post's North West Company days; on p. 17 a celebrated comment by Colin Robertson on Simpson's ambition is attributed to an un-

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known Colin Stewart; on p. 29 Ogden's birth-date of 1794 should now be changed (following the late Dr Cline's researches) to 1790; the Humboldt River could not earlier have been called Mary's River after Ogden's wife (p. 73), whose name was Julia; George IV would hardly have been worried by Ewing Young's activities in 1833 (p. 222) since he had been dead for three years. Less excusable is the repetition of the fictions of an earlier generation of writers about the 'timid and indolent' Hudson's Bay Company just before the coalition of 1821 – an interpretation which makes the battering handed out to the North West Company in those turbulent years hard to understand. On the same page (p. 18) Simpson is accused of viewing the Company servants as 'a rabble'; harsh judge though he was of his fellow men this is a travesty of his attitude. But the most serious and irritating deficiency is that the book has no map worthy of the name. An inadequate sketch map which serves as a frontispiece shows the main features, but dozens of rivers, mountains and plains which loom large in Mr Dillon's account might as well be products of the fevered imagination of one of his trappers struck down with malaria for all the cartographic recognition they receive.

To end on a carping note would be unjust; the book is an enjoyable, generally authoritative, narrative of a subject which has never quite received its proper due from historians.

Dr Williams is Professor of History at Queen Mary College, University of London.

PETER SKENE OGDEN AND THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

By Gloria Griffin Cline. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1974. 279 pp., illus., $8.95.

Reviewed by Shirlee A. Smith

Peter Skene Ogden, H B C fur trader-explorer, had a high degree of good fortune in his lifetime. That good fortune has been extended to having Dr Gloria Griffin Cline as his biographer. Dr Cline admits to a deep admiration for Ogden, but this has not prevented her from writing an objective and well-balanced biography.

The Ogdens were a distinguished military, judicial, and literary family. In 1783 Isaac, Peter Skene's father, went to England to live, as the family was not happy in the new nation of the United States. Five years later Isaac Ogden was appointed judge of the Admiralty Court in Quebec. Peter Skene was born in that city in 1790. Like his biographer, Peter Skene's characteristics were outsize. He was warm, generous, talented and had an infectious enthusiasm for life. Subject and author are well matched. The combination results in a factual and well-written book.

Ogden joined the North West Company about 1810 and was sent to Ile à la Crosse where he met Samuel Black, ten years his senior. The two men became lifelong friends. Their favourite pastime was harassing Hudson's Bay Company employees. It is difficult to excuse Ogden's quarrel-provoking attitudes during his service with the Nor'-Westers. Surely it was more than the exuberant and competitive spirit mentioned by the author. Ogden was undoubtedly influenced by Black, but he also may have had to prove himself physically; unlike his two brothers who entered the legal profession, he had not been interested in proving himself academically. His ungentlemanly-like behaviour is not glossed over. Every breach of fur-trade etiquette, including his banishment to the west side of the mountains by his employers, is noted.

At the amalgamation of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies in 1821 Ogden was excluded, but on the recommendation of prominent fur-trade men, including Governor George Simpson, he was admitted to the service in 1823. This short rejection obviously matured Ogden. The account of his service with the Hudson's Bay Company until his death in 1854 could have been written with a semblance to the combined works of the 19th-century English traveller, Sir Richard Burton, and Cecil B. De Mille. To Dr Cline's credit she writes simply and factually about Ogden's exploits. She has refrained from the use of rhetoric, with its overworked adjectives, that one so frequently encounters in works of this kind. Ogden's arduous Snake Country explorations, his patient handling of Vavasour and Warre, his Whitman Massacre rescue, and his almost unfailing understanding of the Indians are well told. Ogden was one of the few officers who could disagree with Governor George Simpson and still retain his self-respect and his principles. Governor Simpson, who was not noted for revealing his personal feelings, wrote on hearing of Ogden's death:

> . . . our regard for each other has been the growth of years, on my side increasing as I became more and more intimately acquainted with his character and worth . . .

This biography is the result of more than twenty years of research and one feels that the flaws in it would have been corrected had Dr Cline been able to see it through the press (her premature death occurred shortly after completing the manuscript). The historical inaccuracies are few: York Factory (p. 12) was situated on the Hayes River, not on the Nelson; and Ludgate, London, was not 'presumably the eastern gate of the Roman wall' but the western one. The map entitled 'The North America of Peter Skene Ogden' (pp. 16-17) shows Vancouver, which was not founded until the 1860s, but does not show Fort Okanagan, Kamloops, and Fort St James, all well known to Peter Skene Ogden. At the latter fort he was chief factor, in charge of the Caledonia District for nine years. The bibliography lacks consistency in listing editors and authors.

If one considers the book in its entirety these criticisms are minor indeed. Peter Skene Ogden has been more than adequately served by Dr Cline.

Mrs Smith is Hudson's Bay Company Archivist, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

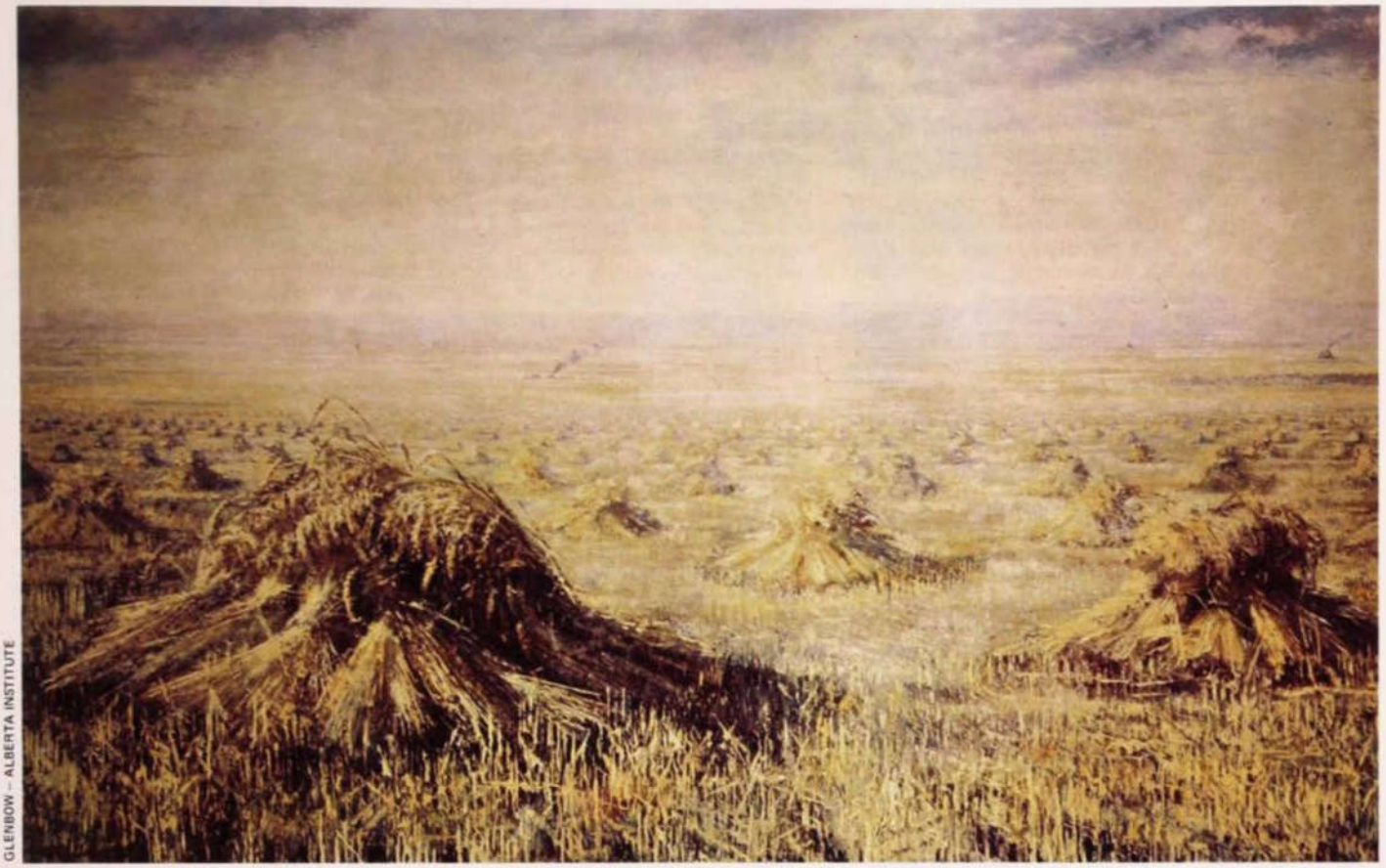
THE MOUNTAINS AND THE SKY

By Lorne E. Render. McClelland and Stewart West, Calgary, 1974. 223 pp. illus., $25.00.

Reviewed by Clarence Tillenius

Who travels for the first time the western half of Canada experiences two overpowering sensations: first, the immense flatness of the prairies stretching hundreds of miles: then, suddenly at their western border the pale blue escarpment rises against the western sky: the massive upthrust of the Rocky Mountains.

Curiously, the very earliest white travellers in the West left only slight mention in their notes and diaries of the meeting with the Rocky Mountains. A later band of writers and



GLENBOW – ALBERTA INSTITUTE

'Harvesting, Nobleford'. An oil by Leonard M. Davis, 1918, from 'The Mountains and the Sky' by Lorne E. Render.

artists would attempt to create for future audiences a body of writings and pictures describing the impact of the two major experiences which Dr Lorne E. Render has named *The Mountains and the Sky*.

In this beautifully presented book Dr Render has, judiciously choosing from the vast collection of Western Canadian art available in the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, attempted to survey the works created by artists striving by visual presentation to render the profound spiritual impact of western prairie, mountains and sky. He begins with the early sketches by surveyors and travellers, who were not so much concerned with the ideal of art in the abstract as they were with giving a fairly realistic presentation of the topography. Many of these early drawings are excellently done. Later came painters with a more detached view though still concerned to render realistically the overpowering *fact* of the mountains. The mountains have invariably proved – because of their very bulk, and the barrier they presented to travel – the preferred subject.

The immensity of the prairies and the vast prairie sky, though no less powerfully affecting the human imagination, seem to be a much more difficult problem for the painter. This is well expressed by the words of artist Illingworth Kerr describing the struggle of the visual artist to come to grips with the impact of this huge flatness.

'Since the Group of Seven had passed up the prairies I thought someone should do something about it. The mistake was taking to the prairies only the equipment to deal with concrete form. The problem of space was not to be dealt with in terms of pattern. Lineal design dissolved in perspective. A straight horizon line pinching back to infinity became a dominating tyrant. I was painfully aware that realism (the literal aspect of nature) must throttle the prairie artist. Space, however, seemed incompatible with the means at my disposal. More recently it has challenged me to attempt abstract equations. In the Dirty Thirties our environment was too personal, too malignant a force, to become so disembodied.'

At first one thinks: surely no one needs all these repetitious pictures of trees, mountains and sky? But as the book and the author's purpose are studied, the value of the format becomes clear. It is like a natural history museum's collection of birdskins: the many examples of a species allow the viewer to group and compare.

In going through the illustrations, many in colour and lavishly distributed throughout the book, viewers will have their own convictions on which of many diverse treatments they find the most compatible. The sketches and paintings of the late Carl Rungius are such powerfully

handled, richly textured evocations of mountains and sky that one may decide the theme could not be handled better. In the mountain paintings of his friend Belmore Browne (also with a studio at Banff) who often chooses identical subjects with Rungius, the student of technique will probably notice that Browne's mountain forms are invariably slightly rounded where the Rungius treatment is rugged, square and angular.

The water-colours of two highly skilled technicians, A. C. Leighton and Walter J. Phillips, bring a different approach to the mountain themes. In addition to completed paintings there are reproduced – happily – many slight water-colour sketches by Phillips which show very well what he regarded as the essential forms to seize on first of all. Contrasted with the works of these two men are the black and white engravings of H. Eric Bergman with his highly decorative treatment of a demanding medium.

The well known painters of the Qu'Appelle Valley, James Henderson and A.F. Kenderdine are well represented in the book as are a number of other prairie painters, both those well and lesser known. Among the proponents of a modern approach to the theme are featured the painters Kerr, Bates, Knowles, Mulcaster, Rogers, Sinclair and House.

Dr Render and his associates have accomplished a massive work in putting this striking publication together: it is not to be wondered at that in choosing from so vast a collection of painters' works there would be some omissions. One such puzzling omission is the absence of any examples of the unique glacier paintings by the late Jack Taylor of Edmonton, for so many years an instructor in landscape at the Banff School of Fine Arts.

But with due allowance for the difficulties encountered, one can guarantee that whoever owns this book will have an exceptionally attractive and comprehensive gathering together of the uniquely varied ways the western landscape has been rendered by the painters' art. And – to this reviewer's mind at least – it underscores again the great service rendered Western Canada by the late Eric L. Harvie, whose dedication and zeal were so potent a force in assembling the unique storehouse of art comprising the Glenbow-Alberta collection.

Clarence Tillenius is famous for his paintings, sketches and museum dioramas that portray Canadian animals in their natural habitat.

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THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE

By George Malcolm Thomson. Seeker and Warburg, London, England. 1975. 288 pages, illus., $12.95

Reviewed by A. Stevenson

This latest volume on the search for the North-West Passage written by George Malcolm Thomson is another record of the dream and drama which encompassed five centuries of time before the dream became a reality. The panorama of the quest begins with Cabot and links the names of men who are now immortalized on our northern maps: Frobisher, Hudson, Ross, Franklin and many others. It ends with the 1903-1906 voyage of Roald Amundsen who, in the 47-ton *Gjoa*, triumphantly completed the first voyage from east to west.

George Malcolm Thomson has drawn from numerous sources to write his account of the search. I could not find any new material, but the book should still appeal, particularly to the new generation of students of arctic exploration. Although many failed in the search for the passage their contributions to the knowledge of the arctic regions and its people is tremendous. The story remains an adventure-filled saga of hardships and tragedies, of courage, speculation and greed, of survival and finally of achievement. It is the story that tells of the limits of a man's endurance, passion, and determination to discover what lies beyond his horizon.

Mr Thomson was born in 1899. He attended university in Edinburgh. He is a former journalist and author of several books, the most recent one being his highly successful biography *Sir Francis Drake. The North-West Passage* with its illustrations, its references to sources for each chapter, its map and bibliography should stimulate interest, especially among young Canadians, in this long arctic quest by men of many nationalities.

The author sums up his subject; 'The quest for the North-West Passage is so extraordinary a phenomenon of the human spirit that, it seems, only the sense of glory can account for it: man was for the last time in history "face to face" with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.'

Mr Stevenson is Chairman, N.W.T. Historical Advisory Board.

LUTIAPIK

By Betty Lee, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1975. 237 pages. $10.00

Reviewed by Frederica Knight

Lutiapik is the account of a year in the life of a young nurse, Dorothy Knight, who left hospital work in southern Ontario to take a posting to the Indian and Northern Health Services nursing station at Lake Harbour on the south coast of Baffin Island. The story is told by professional journalist Betty Lee from Dorothy Knight's recorded memories of the period between the summers of 1957 and 1958.

The jacket of the book offers a cheery promise, which is immediately chilled by the opening of the story, set in a 'death camp' in an outlying area. This beginning is obviously meant to attract the prospective reader with its shock tactics, a common literary device, but as the story proceeds we realize that this first episode is not typical of the young nurse's experiences, and following the events of her journey

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ERRATUM

On page 57 of the Winter 1975 issue, the killer whale depicted on the tombstone, lower left, is the work of an anonymous stonemason, not the work of the famous Haida artist, Charles Edenshaw.

north on the *C. D. Howe*, to her arrival eventually in Lake Harbour by helicopter, *Lutiapik* gradually becomes a rather gloomy account. Ms Knight is revealed to have been a conscientious, hard-working nurse, at first overwhelmed with the responsibility of her position as sole medical officer for a large, sparsely-populated area, but her confidence in her ability to cope with the various day-to-day health problems grew as the regimented life of her hospital experience receded into the past. Over the year she reached a number of conclusions about the conduct of health care in the isolated situation and developed theories on how it might be improved, as her epilogue indicates. Nearly two decades have passed since that time, however, and changes have been so all-encompassing in the lives of the Inuit socially, medically, economically and in the areas of transportation and communication, that the story of her time at Lake Harbour, though not long enough past to have the colour of history, has no relevant comment for the present day.

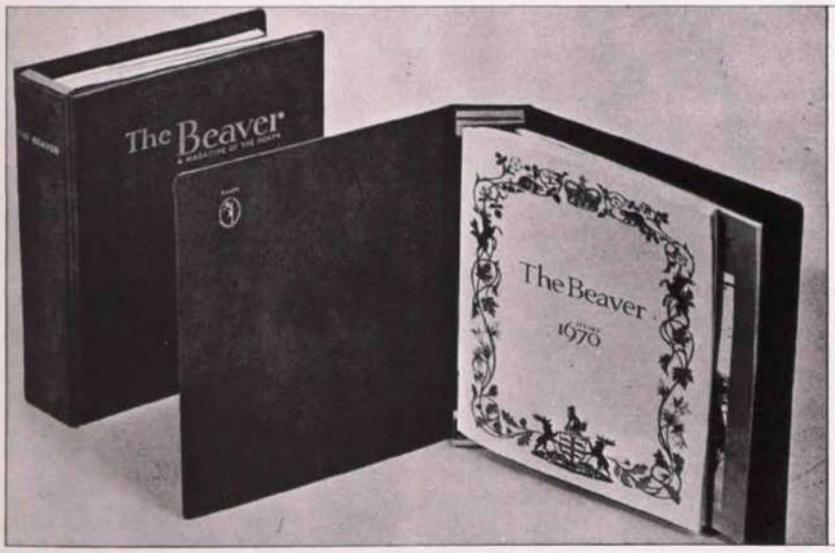
Betty Lee has chosen to give us detailed accounts of Dorothy Knight's chores as a nurse, both in Lake Harbour and at the various outlying camps, interspersed with information about her social life with her white neighbours. She appears to have spent a fair amount of her time travelling by dog-team and canoe and visiting her patients, but she seems to have had the impression that the Inuit were rather childish, impractical people, with little knowledge of any basic health practices, and suffering generally from various afflictions caused by poor hygiene. Their stoicism in the face of death seems to have been offensive to her. One wishes she could have come to know them better as individuals. The story contains brief flashes of sunlight; among these are her appreciation of the beauty of Lake Harbour, the trip to Frobisher Bay by dog-team and the brief acount of the floe-edge idyll in the spring, which brings a rather abrupt end to the account. The overall impression is that Dorothy Knight did not have much fun, and evidently had no wish to continue working in the North.

A few errors and some apocryphal stories were noted. Don Baird's explanation (p. 54) of the presence of the Quonset huts was perhaps the customary attempt by an old hand to impress a new-comer with tall tales. An American weather station was located at Lake Harbour during World War II, and these huts were erected for its use. The baby food reference (p. 64) is another such tale. Silasee did not kill his wife at Port Harrison. The 'Heel', for which Lake Harbour is named by the Inuit, is of silvery-grey, not reddish stone (p. 41). Davidee's wife is Eva, not Tagalik, and Ishwakta's son Mosesie was born prior to 1957. Miss Rundle, the nurse who was killed by a falling trunk, did far more than 'survive the Arctic for an entire year'. She spent a good number of years caring for the health of the people in the North, first employed by the Diocese of the Arctic and later by Indian and Northern Health Services. She deserves more credit than that brief and misleading sentence (p. 115) in a book on nursing in the Arctic. I must also go on record in defence of Port Harrison's beaches, most of which in 1957 were still of beautiful fine sand. The mosquitoes at shiptime could admittedly be nasty, but very few, Inuit or others, bothered to wear headnets.

Accounts of life in the Arctic are popular just now, and one suspects that this fact was the sole motive of the author in writing *Lutiapik*. About twenty-five years ago the Canadian government began taking responsibility in a major way for basic services in the Arctic, and since then many individuals have, for one reason or another, chosen to take a fling at nursing or teaching or serving in some way in isolated settlements. Of these, a fair number did not enjoy the experience, and chose not to return. From the general tenor of this story, Dorothy Knight would seem to be among this group, and there is little evidence that she had any desire or intention to offer her experiences to the reading public.

Spending a year in the Arctic does not automatically result in an entertaining or informative story, and *Lutiapik* does not kindle sparks of enjoyment or curiosity, or provoke nostalgia.

Mrs Knight lived the last year of twenty years in the Arctic at Lake Harbour.



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